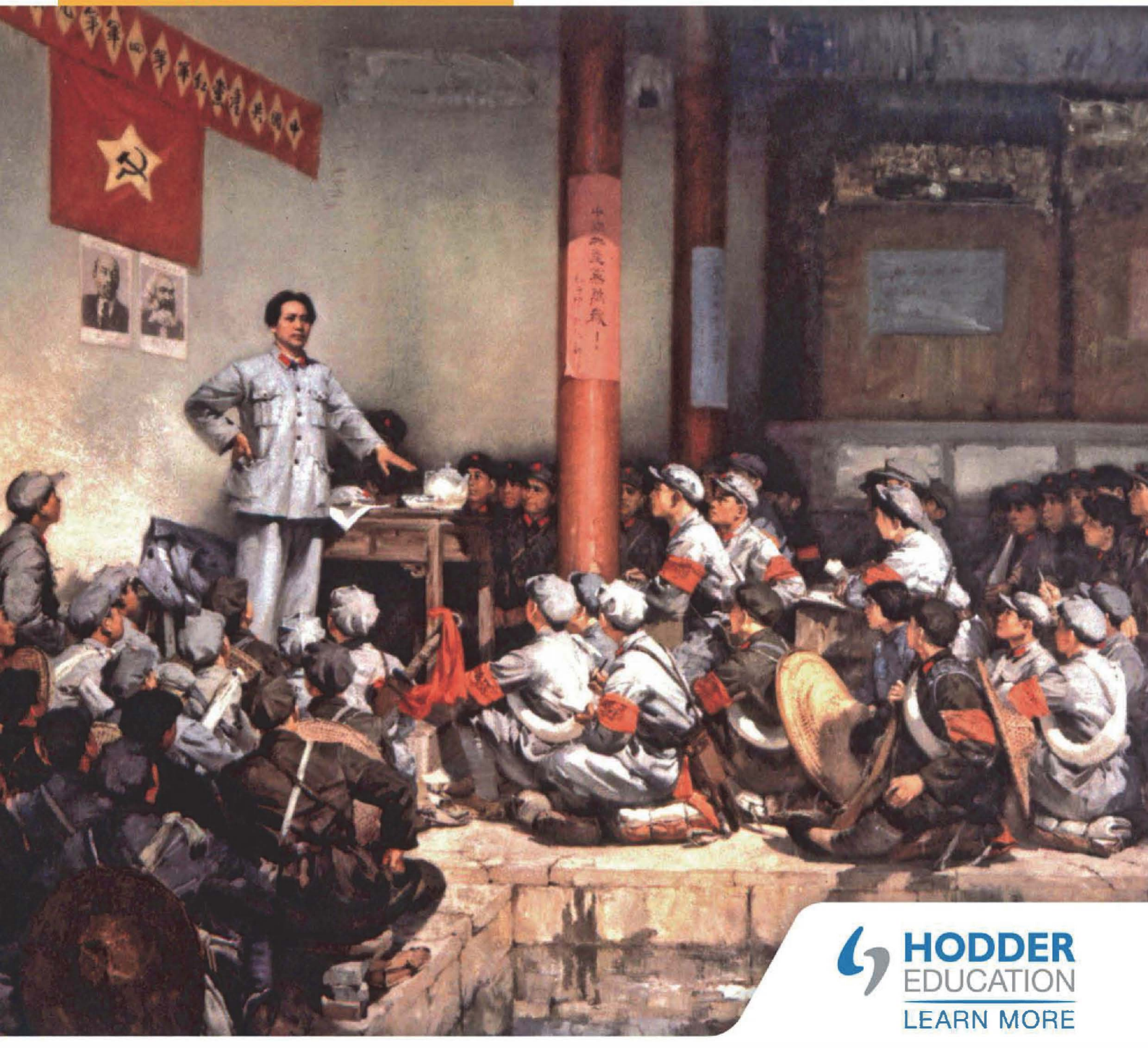
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Dedication

Keith Randell (1943–2002)

The *Access to History* series was conceived and developed by Keith, who created a series to 'cater for students as they are, not as we might wish them to be'. He leaves a living legacy of a series that for over 20 years has provided a trusted, stimulating and well-loved accompaniment to post-16 study. Our aim with these new editions is to continue to offer students the best possible support for their studies.

CHAPTER 1

China 1839–60

In 1839, China was an antique empire ruled by the Manchu dynasty. Politically and socially conservative, it considered itself superior to all other nations. Yet within 30 years it had been forced by stronger Western powers to surrender much of its independence and key parts of its territory to them. These developments and the shock they caused to the Chinese are the subject of this chapter, which studies the material under the following headings:

- ★ The nature of Manchu rule
- ★ The Opium Wars
- ★ Rebellions and the Qing response to them

Key dates

2200BC	Beginning of China's recorded history	**1841**	Convention of Ch'uan-pi
551–479BC	Life of Confucius	**1842**	Treaty of Nanjing
1644	Beginning of Manchu rule of China	**1850**	Beginning of Taiping Rebellion
1794	McCartney's mission to China	**1856–60**	Second Opium War
1839–42	First Opium War	**1860**	Treaty of Tianjin

1 The nature of Manchu rule

▶ *What were the distinctive characteristics of Manchu China?*

Recorded history in China dates from around 2200BC and is customarily measured by reference to the fifteen **imperial dynasties** which ruled from that time until the early twentieth century AD. In 1839, the reigning emperor was a member of the **Manchu** house, the last dynasty to rule China before the overthrow of the imperial system in the revolution of 1911 (see page 48).

KEY TERMS

Imperial dynasties Rule by hereditary emperors belonging to a particular house.

Manchu Also known as the Qing, the last imperial dynasty (1644–1911).

The Manchu (Qing) dynasty

There was an oddity about the position of the Manchus as emperors of China. As their name indicates, they came from Manchuria, a large north-eastern

state that originally lay outside China. Strictly speaking, therefore, the rule of the Manchu was the imposition of foreign authority over China. It is true that the Manchu came to absorb so many aspects of Chinese culture that to the outside observer it seemed that the different peoples were indistinguishable. Nevertheless, the majority Han Chinese never lost their sense of being subject to alien rulers, which explains why when Chinese nationalism began to develop in the nineteenth century it often expressed itself in the form of anti-Manchu agitation. An interesting example of this was the symbolic cutting off by the Chinese of their pigtails, the traditional Manchu hairstyle which had been imposed upon them.

Imperial rule

The emperor was the principal ruler and magistrate, entitled to complete obedience from his subjects and government officials. The imperial title was hereditary and claimed an absolute authority. The right to hold such authority was based on a fundamental feature of Chinese political and social thinking: Confucianism, a set of ideas drawn from the teaching of the philosopher **Confucius**, who lived from 551 to 479BC.

KEY FIGURE

Confucius (551–479BC)

The Latinised name of the Chinese scholar Kong Fuzi, whose ideas influenced China for thousands of years and continue to shape Chinese thinking today.

Confucianism

Confucianism is sometimes loosely defined as a religion, but this is misleading. Confucius was not a religious thinker. It was this world and the people within it that mattered. His basic principle was that unless people lived an ordered life, social harmony would be impossible to achieve and chaos and conflict would follow. To achieve harmony and order it was necessary that society should be structured in accordance with four essential rules. These were:

- the acceptance of the ***status quo***
- the obedience of children to their parents
- the obedience of wives to their husbands
- the obedience of the people to the emperor and his officials.

KEY TERM

Status quo The existing political and social system.

It was not surprising that Confucianism, with its insistence on deference to authority and the need to conform to existing laws, proved highly attractive to China's emperors. The absolute right of the emperor to rule had originally been established by force of arms. What was needed was a justification for holding power that did not depend solely on military might. Confucianism provided exactly that by asserting that obedience to proper authority was essential to the existence of a virtuous, harmonious society. Emperors consistently claimed that anyone who disputed their control was damaging the proper and natural order of things and was not to be tolerated. Such challengers became social outcasts and were treated with great severity. China gained a reputation for the merciless way it dealt with internal rebellions. Convicted rebels were treated as common criminals and publicly executed by methods such as beheading or strangulation.

The imperial court

The emperor, formally referred to as 'His Celestial Highness', resided in the **Forbidden City** in Beijing (Peking), venturing outside only on special occasions to perform public ceremonies, such as blessing the seasonal harvest. It was in the Forbidden City that all the government offices were situated and where the courtiers who served the emperor lived. The absolutism of the emperor meant that power was not spread downwards. It was unthinkable that the people should have any say in government. The result was that ideas such as democracy, parliamentary and representative government were unknown in Chinese politics. Such politics as did occur took place within the court and were essentially a matter of rival individuals and groups competing for the emperor's attention and favour.

Court life was heavily regulated and formal. Among the courtiers were a significant number of **eunuchs** responsible for the everyday running of the court. One of their particular duties was to watch over the **concubines**, chosen women who lived in a court harem and whose role singly or collectively was to satisfy the emperor's sexual needs and whims. Despite the gossip and intrigue that flourished in such a closeted atmosphere, the pattern of imperial court proceedings had remained substantially the same for four millennia.

The mandarins

It was the predominance of Confucianism in official thinking that secured the position of a particularly influential class in imperial China – the **mandarins**. These were scholars trained in the subtleties of Confucian learning. They went through a series of rigid examinations. Once they had passed these, they joined an exclusive class of officials who ran China under the authority of the emperor. As government officials in the emperor's court and as local governors in China's provinces, they were indispensable to the operation of imperial rule. The importance administratively of the mandarins made them a social and political elite, who zealously guarded their privileges. Although they did not survive long into the twentieth century, their existence over thousands of years left a tradition of bureaucratic control by an exclusive group of privileged officials that was to be paralleled by the rule of the Communist Party in twentieth-century China (see page 154).

KEY TERMS

Forbidden City Beijing's greatest monument, a spacious walled inner city that had been the home of the emperors and the court since 1368.

Eunuchs Selected young men who were castrated at an early age and spent their life at court. The position was eagerly sought after and to be chosen was regarded as a great honour.

Concubines Girls and young women chosen for their attractiveness and brought to court. To be selected brought great pride upon the girl and her family.

Mandarins A class of educated bureaucrats who assisted the emperor in governing China.

The Manchu view of China's place in the world

The Chinese word for China is *zhongguo*, meaning 'the middle kingdom' or 'the centre of the world'. Until the nineteenth century, China had regarded itself as a society superior to all others. It did have occasional contacts with the outside world, but it never considered these as especially significant. It retained a sense of its own uniqueness. Over thousands of years, under the rule of its emperors, it had developed a deep belief that it was a self-sufficient culture which needed nothing from foreign nations. The dismissive Chinese term to describe the

KEY TERMS

Sino-centric Inward looking, preoccupied with China. 'Sino' is a prefix meaning Chinese.

Kowtow The requirement that, when entering the emperor's presence, visitors showed respect by not looking upon him and by prostrating themselves face down and tapping their head nine times on the floor.

people of other nations was 'barbarians'. This was a clear example of the essentially **Sino-centric** nature of Chinese thinking, which resulted from its centuries of detachment from outside influences. Until the nineteenth century, Chinese map-makers always put China in the centre with the rest of the world circling round it.

One crucial consequence of this self-regarding view of themselves was that the Chinese were slow to develop a concept of progress. China's rulers saw no need to introduce reform. Why change when the nation had all it required? This derived not from idleness or lack of imagination but from adherence to the Confucian patterns of thought that laid great emphasis on maintaining the existing order of things.

The belief that China was wholly self-sufficient, both culturally and materially, meant there was no value in maintaining contact with foreigners. Yet, on occasion, China did need goods and materials from outside. What developed, therefore, was an elaborate tribute system. China would enter into commerce with other nations, but any trade in which it engaged was regarded as being made up of gifts received from inferiors. Ironically, what China gave in return was often greater in amount and worth than it received. But this strange pattern of commerce preserved the notion of China's supremacy.

Striking examples of this were to be found in Sino-British relations. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a number of British delegations approached the Chinese emperor with proposals for closer trading links. The Chinese answer on every occasion was to thank the British for their courtesy but to point out that, since Britain had nothing of real value to offer China, there was no point in establishing such relations. When, in 1794, King George III's representative, Lord McCartney, was eventually allowed to enter the Forbidden City in Beijing to be received by the emperor, he caused acute diplomatic embarrassment by refusing to **kowtow** in the traditional way. Unsurprisingly, the talks that followed were not a success, as was evident from the letter handed to McCartney on his departure. It was from the Emperor Qianlong and was intended for King George III. A key passage read: 'We possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures.'

In their separate ways, McCartney's disregard of Chinese sensibilities and Qianlong's belief in Chinese self-dependence may be seen as anticipating the trauma that China was to experience when Western imperialism began to impose itself a few decades later (see page 14).

Society under the Manchus

Confucianism became integral to Chinese culture. Its key precepts of placing the good of society before the rights of the individual and of obeying legitimate authority continue to this day to colour Chinese thinking.

Status of women in imperial China

Imperial China was a **patriarchal** system. Confucius had taught that for a society to be harmonious it had to follow a set of rules, one of which required the obedience of wives to their husbands. As a result, it had become traditional for women to be discriminated against in China. On rare occasions females did play a leading role in public life – one example was Cixi (Xi Xi, see page 27) – but these were exceptions. Most women were treated very much as subordinates. They were denied a formal education since it was considered that their essential role was domestic: the raising of children and running the home. A fascinating example of women's subordination was Wen Qimei, the mother of Mao Zedong, China's great revolutionary leader in the twentieth century (see page 81). Wen Qimei was not a name; it simply means 'seventh daughter', an indication of the depersonalised way in which female children were often classified.

KEY TERMS

Patriarchal Male dominated.

Bride-price The payment made by the groom's family to the bride's family to seal a marriage contract.

Forced marriage

Mao Zedong's early life (he was born in 1893) offers further fascinating insights into how restricted women's lives were in imperial China. At the age of fourteen, Mao was informed by his father that a betrothal had been arranged for him; he was to marry a twenty-year-old woman from a nearby village. Arranged marriages were customary in imperial China. Love and compatibility were not a consideration. The arrangement was purely economic. The boy's family paid money to the girl's family, the amount being calculated on how many children she was likely to produce. The benefit for the groom's family was that they gained, in effect, an unpaid domestic servant since the usual practice was for the bride to become a skivvy under her mother-in-law's orders. As it happened, Mao rejected all this; he declined to cooperate in the match-making even when his father told him that the **bride-price** had already been paid. Mao had successfully defied his father and Chinese social convention.

As a young man, Mao had witnessed the execution of a young girl in his home village of Shaoshan in Hunan province. As punishment for taking a lover and rejecting the man she was betrothed to, the girl had been tied to a weighted plank and held underwater until she drowned. Mao often recounted this story as a depiction of the social oppression of women that had prevailed in imperial China.

Foot-binding

The girl's killing was an extreme example of the ill-treatment to which women were subjected. More common was the notorious practice of foot-binding. This involved the tight bandaging of the feet to prevent their growth. The purpose was two-fold: to hobble the women so as to restrict their movements and to make them more attractive to potential husbands, Chinese men customarily regarding small feet as highly erotic. Interestingly, one of the first reforms Mao

made as leader of China was to prohibit foot-binding, evidence that it had survived as practice in rural China until at least the 1940s.

The imperial economy

In 1839, there were a number of aspects of China's economy that merit attention.

Population

Ethnically, China was composed of four main peoples: Han, Manchu, Mongol and Tibetan. Of these four groups, the Han were by far the most numerous, forming 95 per cent of the population. It was this Han predominance that historically had given China its sense of being one nation, despite its great size (slightly larger in area than the modern USA) and its many linguistic, regional and climatic variations. In 1839, China had a population of 300 million, which would double by 1900 and double again by the end of the twentieth century.

Agrarian problems

KEY TERM

Feudalism A system in which peasants held land but never fully owned it since it remained the property of the landlord for whom they worked.

In 1839, China's internal economy was overwhelmingly agricultural, with the great mass of the people being peasants who lived in villages and rented the land on which they worked. Despite **feudalism** having been formally abolished in the eighteenth century, the relationship between peasant and landowner was still essentially one of dependence. The landlord could turn the renter off his property simply by raising the rent prohibitively. Even where the peasant was buying rather than renting, he was still very vulnerable since invariably he had borrowed the money (usually from the landlord) and was, therefore, at the mercy of the lender, who was free to raise the interest rate should he choose. Hatred of landlords was a potent and persistent feature of Chinese society and one which Mao Zedong would later effectively exploit (see page 87).

The type of food produced on the land was determined by the local soil and climatic conditions and, consequently, in a country as large as China, varied considerably. An understanding of the variation can be gained by study of the map shown in Figure 1.1. At its most efficient, Chinese peasant family life had an attractive simplicity, as described (Source A) by a British observer of the pattern of agrarian activity in Fukien province:

SOURCE A

From the Mitchell Report 1854, quoted in Jack Gray, *China from the 1800s to 2000*, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 79.

The Fukien farmer, among his other crops, raises a certain proportion of sugar. This sugar he dispenses of in the spring to a trader at the nearest seaport, who ships it to Tientsin or some other northern port during the summer monsoon, undertaking to pay the farmer for it, part in money, part in northern cotton when his junk returns.

? According to Source A, what are the main features of the farming pattern in Fukien?

When the harvest is gathered, all hands in the farmhouse turn to carding, spinning and weaving this [northern] cotton, and out of this homespun stuff, a heavy and durable material, they clothe themselves; and the surplus they carry to the market town, the manufacture varying from the coarsest dungaree to the finest nanking [or nankeen, a kind of cotton cloth], all costing the producer nothing beyond the raw material, or rather the sugar he exchanged for it.

That description, however, offered an idealised and oversimplified picture. Things seldom worked as smoothly as that. China's rapidly growing population put great pressure on its food production and explains why famines and rebellions caused by poverty were a common occurrence in China. The problem was not land shortage; there was sufficient space for new areas to be cultivated. The difficulty arose from the peasants' inability to prepare the ground with the speed and efficiency required for crops to be sown and harvested. This failure was not from lack of will or effort but because the peasants did not have the equipment to do it efficiently. For example, the basic pattern of ploughing had not changed in centuries. Wooden implements were still used, deep blade metal ploughs being unknown. Until China adopted the technological advances that had modernised farming in Europe and the USA, China's food needs would run ahead of its capacity to meet them.

Trade

Although China's rulers claimed they had no need of trade with outside countries (see page 4), foreign commerce had increased considerably, rising by an annual four per cent during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which led to the growth in size and importance of the coastal and river ports.

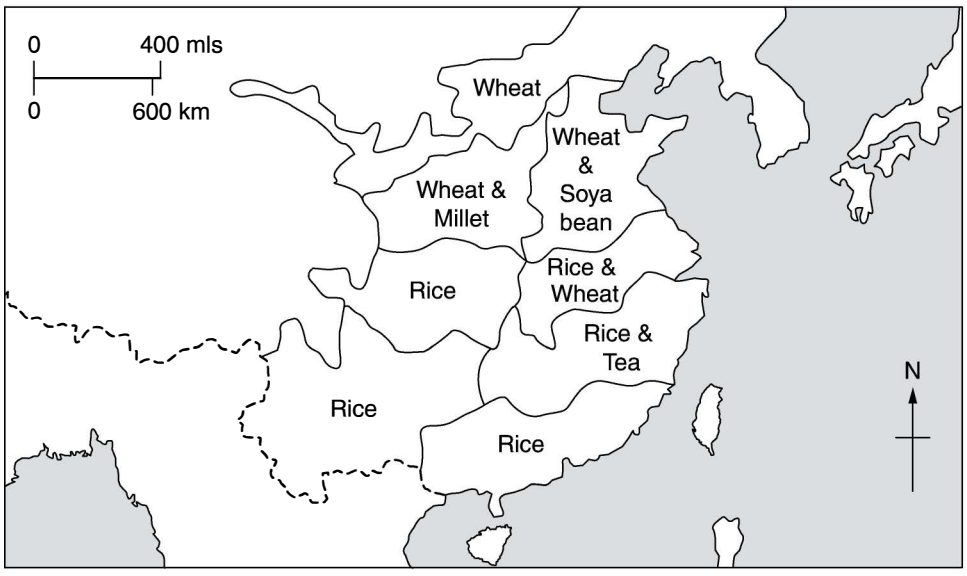


Figure 1.1 Main areas of food and crop production in China.

China's exports were principally furs, tobacco, porcelain, silk and tea, the last three items being especially notable. The huge demand for white tea that developed in Britain in the later eighteenth century meant that within a generation it had become China's most profitable export. The European taste for tea was part of a general quickening of interest in **Chinoiserie** which helped to stimulate China's silk and porcelain exports.

Yet although external trade had grown, as long as the official court view was that China had no real need of it, it was unlikely to receive much government support. What shattered this condescending air of detachment was the issue of **opium** imports. It was opium that was destined to change the character and history of China and its people.

KEY TERMS

Chinoiserie Chinese artistic items such as delicately painted silk screens and decorated porcelain jugs and vases.

Opium Produced from the seed of the poppy flower, which grew profusely in parts of India. Smoked in its crushed form, it induces feelings of relaxation and well-being.

Free trade (also known as *laissez-faire*). A commercial system based on the conviction that governments should not attempt to regulate trade but should leave it entirely in the hands of the traders.

East India Company A private British company which had achieved a huge commercial success in foreign trading and had been largely responsible for the growth of Britain's preponderant influence in India.

2 The Opium Wars

- *Why did China become involved with Britain in wars over opium?*
- *What impact did the Opium Wars have on China?*

China's belief in its own unique greatness was severely shaken by enforced contact with the West, beginning with the Opium Wars in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

The First Opium War 1839–42

The first open conflict broke out in 1839, when the Manchu government rejected British demands that China increase its purchases of opium from British India. The war had both long- and short-term causes.

Long-term causes

- By the 1830s, Britain's expansion as a major European **free trade** power led to its exploitation of China as both a market and a source of materials. This made war highly likely, if not inevitable, since Britain's thrusting economic ways were alien to the Chinese.
- The **East India Company**, which had control of the opium trade in India and Burma and issued licences to merchants, had expanded rapidly by the 1830s. In 1767, it had exported 1000 chests of opium to China; in 1800, the figure had risen to 4500 chests; by 1838, the figure stood at 40,000 chests. One chest contained an average of 133 pounds (60 kg) of opium.
- These figures did not indicate a growth in genuine Chinese demand. It was more a matter of the licensed traders' pressuring Chinese importers to take more. Nor were the traders above using illegal means. Ignoring the attempts of the Chinese authorities to restrict the imports, they did deals with corrupt officials and smugglers to ensure that the intake of opium was maintained.

- The money that Britain received from the opium trade was a vital source of income from which it paid for its increasing imports of tea from China. Any serious disruption of this would badly affect Britain's balance of payments, a situation which it was hardly likely to tolerate.
- Imperial China's lack of modernity made it suspicious of **European expansionism**. China was unready economically and culturally to adapt to Britain's demanding style.
- Britain's awareness of China's relative military weakness made it ready to push things to the point of conflict since it had every expectation of winning any war that might follow. Acknowledged internationally as the world's greatest naval power, Britain had little to fear from China's antiquated warships.
- A feature of history is that stronger nations or powers tend to dominate weaker ones and force them to conform to their territorial or economic demands. Should the weaker nation attempt to resist, it is subjected to invasion or attack. The relationship is, therefore, one in which war is a constant likelihood. The relationship between China and Britain as it had developed by the second quarter of the nineteenth century was a recipe for conflict.

To these long-term causes of tension were added a set of immediate reasons for conflict.

KEY TERM

European expansionism
The desire of the major European powers to open up new areas for commercial exploitation.

Short-term causes

- The vital first step towards the outbreak of war was the realisation by the Chinese government that its purchase of opium was rapidly draining the treasury of its financial reserves. Sino-British trade was conducted in silver. Up to the 1830s, there had been a rough balance between the value of Britain's import of Chinese tea and China's import of British opium. But, by the late 1830s, this balance had been broken. China was paying out $18 million in silver.
- To this was added a growing awareness in government circles of the disruptive impact of opium on Chinese society. The lethargy and apathy that the drug produced in addicts were destroying work habits, family relations and social harmony. It was a matter of scale. Opium, which was acceptable when taken by a few, became intolerable when taken by the many.
- It was on these economic and social grounds that the Qing government decided to assert itself in 1839 by ordering the seizure of the opium stocks in Canton, the port through which 90 per cent of the drug was distributed.
- The difficulty was that the Qing already had in place decrees which prohibited the use of opium. These had not been acted on consistently and a mistaken impression had developed among the foreign traders that the Chinese government, rather than tightening restrictions, was about to declare opium legal. This followed from a misreading of the reports of discussions held between 1836 and 1838 in the Manchu court. Foreign observers often

found it difficult to interpret court debates accurately. Expecting wrongly, that 1838 would see the full legalisation of the opium trade, merchants had stockpiled their supplies in Chinese warehouses.

- However, the traders found that instead of their markets widening, they were closed down and their stocks seized and destroyed.
- **Lin Zexu** (1785–1850) was sent as special imperial commissioner to Canton (Guangzhou) to supervise the operation. His appointment proved critical. Lin was a court mandarin who became a leading administrator under the Qing. His fierce objection to the opium trade was not simply because it drained China of bullion and affronted Chinese independence. He condemned it on moral and health grounds and ordered a campaign to be mounted against it. (The scale of the operation is clear from the figures in the box.)

Lin's anti-opium campaign, March to May 1839

- 50,000 pounds of opium were seized by the Chinese authorities.
- 70,000 opium pipes were confiscated.
- 1600 Chinese opium addicts were arrested.

Initially, Lin's strong line was supported by the Qing; Emperor Daoguang praised him for his forceful assertion of China's independence. After the war, Daoguang was to back down and turn on Lin, claiming that his tough stance had led to conflict, whereas a more accommodating approach would have avoided hostilities. This was both unfair and inaccurate; initially, Lin had tried to maintain workable relations with foreign merchants, telling them that his aim was to prevent trade not in legitimate goods but only in opium. However, when they declined to consider abandoning their lucrative trade, Lin continued with the seizure and destruction of all known opium stocks and the arrest of the major traders.

Lin produced a powerful moral argument to justify his action. One remarkable example of this was a letter he sent to the young Queen Victoria asking by what right did the British enforce a 'poisonous drug' on the Chinese people, a drug that was forbidden in Britain. 'Where is your conscience?', he asked.

That the letter probably never reached the queen and that opium consumption was not illegal in Britain did not detract from the sense of moral outrage that was being expressed. Lin's resolute stand was the cue for many in the international community to leave Canton and seek safety in Portuguese Macao. It was from there that the British merchant contingent, led by their chief spokesman, Charles Elliot, appealed directly to the British government to intervene militarily on their behalf. Viscount Palmerston, the foreign secretary, had initial misgivings about becoming involved, but in the face of sustained lobbying by a large body of textile manufacturers in Britain, who feared losing their valuable Chinese markets, he gave way and ordered gunboats to be sent to Chinese waters.

SOURCE B

From Lord Palmerston's despatch to the minister of the emperor of China, 20 February 1840, quoted in Frederick Whyte, *China and the Foreign Powers*, Oxford University Press, 1928, p. 42.

The Undersigned, Her Britannick Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has the honour to inform the Minister of the Emperor of China, that Her Majesty The Queen of Great Britain has sent a Naval and Military Force to the Coast of China, to demand from the Emperor satisfaction and redress for injuries inflicted by Chinese Authorities upon British Subjects resident in China, and for insults offered by those same Authorities to the British Crown.

Her majesty cannot permit that her subjects residing abroad should be treated with violence, and be exposed to insult and injustice; and when wrong is done to them, Her Majesty will see that they obtain redress.

On what grounds does Palmerston, in Source B, justify using armed force against China? ?

Character of the war

The arrival of the British gunboats in Chinese waters in 1840 marked the beginning of the Opium Wars.

- The war on land was largely a matter of siege and counter-siege, with Chinese forces obliging Westerners to take refuge in the **foreign settlements** only for British troops to break the sieges, free the beleaguered Westerners, and in turn force the Chinese to take shelter in their own areas.
- Although the Chinese forces often resisted courageously, their weapons and equipment did not match those of the British. The steamships, which had a draft of less than two fathoms (12 feet, 3.7 m), were able to sail many miles inland up river, outmanoeuvre the slow-moving Chinese **junks** and blast them with superior cannon power. On land, the British forces were equipped with rifles whose quick-loading mechanisms, long range, and relative accuracy were of immense advantage over the **flintlock muskets** carried by the Chinese.
- The British made a point of capturing vital warehouses and river barges in which the silver raised in taxes was stored, thus denying the Chinese the ability to pay their soldiers and fund the war effort.
- In June 1840, a British force largely made up of troops from the British Indian army, sent from Singapore, arrived by sea to put Canton and other ports and towns under siege.
- A fleet of 25 steam ships armed with cannon bombarded the coastal forts on China's east coast and up the Yangzi (Yangtse) and Pearl Rivers.
- In 1842, reinforcements increased Britain's strength to the point where it was able to capture the Bogue forts, which commanded the entrance to the Pearl River delta. By the summer of that year, the British forces were in a position to seize the key city of Shanghai, a defeat which obliged the Chinese to make peace.

KEY TERMS

Foreign settlements In addition to the British, a number of other Westerners, principally French, Russian and American traders and missionaries, had set up bases in China.

Junks Slow-moving, flat-bottomed, sailing vessels.

Flintlock muskets Cumbersome weapons, long abandoned by European armies, which required considerable time and effort to load and fire.

Convention of Ch'uan-pi, January 1841

Early in 1841, in an effort to call a halt to the fighting, which was going badly for the Chinese, Qishan, the provincial governor of Guangdong (Kwangtung), entered into discussions with Charles Elliot, acting as a British **plenipotentiary**. These talks became known as the Convention of Ch'uan-pi (variant English spellings are Chuanbi, Chuenpee Chunpi, Qunbi). They concluded with the following terms:

- China to pay Britain $6 million in compensation.
- Canton to be fully open to British trade.
- Hong Kong island to be ceded to Britain.
- The Qing government to be permitted to collect taxes from Hong Kong.
- Britain to withdraw from the islands it had temporarily occupied during the war.

The Convention did not become a formal treaty since neither China nor Britain was happy with it. Learning of the negotiations, the Emperor Daoguang, asserting that Qishan had no authority to enter into such agreements, dismissed him. In effect, this was only a partial delay in the implementation of the main terms. The British insisted that they be made into a binding agreement. The result was that a year later, following the defeat of the Chinese forces, the Qing were obliged to accept the Treaty of Nanjing, whose main terms are set out below.

KEY TERMS

Plenipotentiary A special government representative invested with full power to negotiate.

'Most favoured nation' Special economic privilege and status extended by one nation to another.

'Unequal treaties' One-sided agreements forced on the Chinese government, which obliged China to recognise foreign trading and territorial rights.

Treaty of Nanjing 1842 (supplemented by the Treaty of Bogue 1843)

- The Qing government was required to pay Britain $21 million in compensation for damage and lost opium sales resulting from the war.
- China agreed to cede Hong Kong island to Britain as a colony 'in perpetuity' (permanently).
- Britain was granted special trading rights in China's main ports: Shanghai, Xiamen, Fuzhou and Guangzhou.
- British subjects were to be entitled to purchase property and take up residence in the treaty ports.
- British residents were exempt from local Chinese law.

It was in the aftermath of the Nanjing and Bogue treaties that the Chinese government entered into similar agreements with France and the USA, the Treaty of Wangxia (1845) granting the United States **'most favoured nation'** status. The government's motive was less a desire to open China to the French and the Americans and more a wish to be in a position in which it could play off Britain against other Western nations. The treaties marked a key stage in the opening of China to British and European influence. It became the model for all the succeeding **'unequal treaties'** imposed on China (see page 15).

The Second Opium War 1856–60

Having being forced to sign the humiliating peace treaties of 1841–2, the Chinese authorities were left embittered and resentful, a situation which left a strong likelihood that hostilities would break out again. This duly happened in 1856 with the **Second Opium War**.

Causes

Aware that, after 1842, France and the USA had succeeded in imposing their own commercial agreements on China, Britain, in 1854, citing the right granted under the terms of the Nanjing treaty to renegotiate terms, made the following demands:

- All Chinese ports were to be fully open to British traders.
- China to accept that opium imports from British India and Burma were wholly legal.
- British goods coming into China to be free of **import levies**.
- A permanent British embassy with full diplomatic powers to be established in Beijing.

The Manchu government played for time; for two years it declined to give a clear response to the demands. But an event occurred in 1856 that led directly to the renewal of war. In October of that year, Canton port police impounded the *Arrow*, a ship known to have been involved in piracy and opium smuggling. Although it was legally registered as a Chinese ship, the *Arrow*'s Chinese owners lived in British Hong Kong and their ship sailed under a British flag. It was on these grounds that they appealed for British protection. Britain responded by taking up the owners' cause and demanding that the ship be released and its imprisoned crew freed. When the Chinese were slow to react, Palmerston (see page 10) sanctioned the shelling of Canton by British warships.

Backed by France, Russia and the USA, who claimed that in various separate incidents their own nationals had been abused and assaulted by the Chinese, Britain proceeded to enforce its will on China. In 1857, an Anglo-French coalition force seized Canton. A year later, a naval force drawn from the same two countries brought Tianjin, the main northern port serving Beijing, under European control.

Treaty of Tianjin, 1858

In the following year, China bowed to the demands of Britain and France, and signed the Treaty of Tianjin, whose main terms were:

- Eleven Chinese ports were to be opened up to foreign trade.
- Britain, France, Russia and the United States were to be granted the right to set up embassies in the capital, Beijing, traditionally a city closed to foreigners.

KEY TERMS

Second Opium War Known to the Chinese as the Anglo-French War.

Import levies Payments that foreign traders were required to pay to the Chinese government as a condition of trade.

- Foreigners were to be entitled to travel in China without restriction and to engage in trade and religious missionary work.
- China's principal river, the Yangzi, was to be open to foreign shipping (including warships).
- Foreign and Chinese Christians were to be entitled to worship openly without interference from the Qing authorities.
- China was required to pay $10 million in silver dollars to both Britain and France.
- A further $5 million was to be paid to British merchants in reparation for their losses during the fighting.
- In official correspondence, the Chinese authorities were to drop all slighting references to the British, such as the word 'barbarian'.

In 1860, Britain and France, claiming that the Chinese were not putting the treaty terms into practice, sent another joint force, this time to China's capital itself. In an operation that caused a lasting sense of outrage among the Chinese, who regarded it as clear proof of European barbarism, a British force attacked and burned down the buildings of the **Summer Palace** in Beijing. The attack had been approved by Lord Elgin, the British high commissioner, who defended the action as retaliation for the killing by the Chinese of two British journalists. He also asserted that since the original plan had been to destroy the Forbidden City (see page 3), the attack on the Summer Palace was an act of clemency.

KEY TERMS

Summer Palace A set of picturesque buildings, lakes and gardens that dated from the thirteenth century AD, but had been allowed to fall into disrepair by 1860.

Indentured labourers Workers tied to their employers by harsh legal restrictions. The Chinese 'coolies', as the indentured labourers became disparagingly known, played a vital part in the construction of the US railways in the nineteenth century.

Convention of Beijing 1860

Despite their anger, the Chinese no longer had the means to resist and in October 1860 accepted the Convention of Beijing, which ratified the Tianjin treaty of 1858. They also confirmed the separate agreements China had reached between 1858 and 1860 with France, Russia and the USA. Two added concessions made by the Qing government were of particular note:

- The port of Kowloon opposite Hong Kong island was granted to Britain on a permanent basis.
- The Manchu government was to grant permission to Chinese nationals to emigrate to North America as **indentured labourers**.

Results of the Opium Wars

Few events in Chinese history had such momentous consequences as the Opium Wars. They showed what the Chinese had long been unwilling to admit, that advances in Western technology had given the European powers a military and economic superiority over China. The inability of the Chinese to match this European firepower came as a shattering revelation. It brought into question the hitherto unchallenged notion of Chinese supremacy and raised doubts about the true character of Chinese culture and identity. While China had previously regarded itself as special, other parts of the world had not. To the profound dismay of the Chinese, the Opium Wars brought home to them that they were not strong enough to resist European demands.

Here was a cultural trauma from which the Manchu never fully recovered. The regime was clearly incapable of effective resistance to the foreigners, who imposed a series of 'unequal treaties' on China. This reduced the esteem in which the imperial system had been traditionally held and encouraged revolutionary nationalism among those Chinese who yearned to see their nation recover its former greatness.

A humiliated China had to accept a huge increase in the import of opium, a drug that debilitated many of its people, and to hand over territory, including Hong Kong, to British control. Where Britain had led, other Western nations were quick to follow. By the end of the century, dotted along China's coastline and up the major rivers, there were 50 'treaty ports' in British, German, French or Portuguese hands. These Western enclaves, such as Shanghai, Qingdao, Guangzhou and Hong Kong, became European mini-states in which the laws of the occupying European power took total precedence over those of the Chinese, who were forced to grant the foreigners a range of commercial, legal and religious privileges.

The result was that the West, by a series of unequal treaties, was able to assert a hold on China, which saw many regions in its major cities and ports became enclaves of foreign control, containing **international settlements** known as **'concessions'**. Chinese people found themselves subject to alien laws and conventions. They were victims of a cultural takeover against which they had no right of appeal.

China's island neighbour and traditional rival, Japan, also exploited the situation, by making increasing demands on China for territory and economic concessions. This pressure was to culminate in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5 in which China was crushed (see page 32).

Defeat in the Opium Wars produced a double response among China's population. Some Chinese developed a fierce dislike of the foreign exploiters and their barbarian ways. Others, while dismayed by their country's humiliation, were impressed by the economic and military prowess of the Westerners and resolved that only by copying the best of those ways could China begin to modernise itself.

This was first expressed in the willingness of many Chinese to become employees and local representatives of Western companies and concerns that rushed in after 1860 to exploit China. This invariably enabled them to receive higher wages and benefit from expanded career opportunities. A significant class of Chinese **'compradors'** developed, who became invaluable agents for the foreign businesses.

Whatever the positive benefits that may have subsequently accrued to many Chinese from the foreign presence in their land, the Opium Wars became a defining moment in China's modern history. By reference to them, the Chinese could explain both why they had fallen under foreign domination and why they

KEY TERMS

International settlements (concessions) Zones in which the foreign expatriates lived and in which their laws, religion and practices operated to the exclusion of the Chinese.

'Compradors' Chinese nationals who acted as go-betweens between the foreign companies and government officials.



Figure 1.2 Map of treaty ports established under the 'unequal treaties' in the nineteenth century.

were so resolved to win back their independence. Interestingly, Deng Xiaoping (leader of China 1978–97) made constant allusion to the Opium Wars to explain to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher why China was utterly determined to reclaim Hong Kong in 1997 (see page 260).

The British in Shanghai

Shanghai had always been an important Chinese administrative centre. Having established control of it by the late 1840s, the British showed remarkable speed in developing it into China's major port. Much of the marshland in the area was

drained and sections of the banks of the Yangzi River delta on which Shanghai stood were strengthened. Piers and jetties were constructed in the harbour and extensive office buildings and warehouses erected. The impact of all this is suggested by the following details:

- By the late 1850s, consular offices dealing with Sino-British trade had been created. Learning from this example, the French and the Americans soon followed, creating their own offices in their concession areas. Cooperation between Britain and the USA proved so mutually helpful diplomatically and economically that the two countries merged their concession areas in 1863 to form the Shanghai International Settlement.
- In the same period, over 100 trading offices with their scores of British and Chinese staff had been opened.
- A Western hospital had also been set up and a Christian church, served by twenty missionaries, had been built.
- The number of ships using the harbour rose from 44 in 1844 to 437 in 1855.
- An indication of the trade boom which Shanghai experienced was the statistic that the import–export value of textiles stood at over £5 million in 1860.
- Shanghai's success attracted a growing number of foreign commercial and financial interests, a process which over the succeeding decades turned it into one of the world's most prosperous and cosmopolitan cities.
- Much as Britain and other outsiders may have profited from Shanghai's expansion, the problem for China was that it did not share proportionally in the wealth generated. This left the paradox of the Chinese regarding Shanghai as both a reproach and an inspiration; a reproach in that it had required foreigners to develop the city, an inspiration in that it showed what opportunities for wealth creation lay within China.

Shanghai was not simply of value to the British as a port in its own right. What its possession gave to the British was access inland. The penetration up river along the Yangzi valley opened whole regions of central China to British trade and influence.

3 Rebellions and the Qing response to them

- *What was the scale of the Taiping Rebellion?*
- *What did the rebellion reveal about the character of imperial China?*

The Opium Wars coincided with an internal event which was as damaging to the reputation of the imperial system as was its subjection to foreign demands. Between 1850 and 1864, there occurred the most destructive rebellion in China's history, that of the Taiping. Peasant risings against the imperial government

had been frequent throughout Chinese history. Invariably, these had been local affairs, which were crushed with ease and were followed by the rebel leaders' summary execution for daring to challenge the divine rule of the emperors. The Taiping Rebellion that began in 1850 was different; it lasted for fifteen years, affected large areas of China, and was eventually put down only with the greatest difficulty. Approximately 50 million people died before the rebellion was finally crushed.

The Taiping Rebellion 1850–64

Initially, the rebellion was a movement in Guangdong province among the Hakka people, a branch of the Han race, protesting against their economic conditions, which had been depressed by harvest failures and heavy government taxation. Led by the charismatic **Hong Xiuquan**, it became an amalgam of nationalist resentment against the rule of the alien Manchu dynasty and a demand that peasant conditions be improved. However, what gave the **Taiping** Rebellion its particular character was its embracing of religion. Proclaiming that he was ushering in the era of the Taiping (the Celestial Kingdom of Heavenly Peace), Hong preached bitter hatred against the Manchu as the oppressive instruments of the Devil.

KEY FIGURE

Hong Xiuquan (1812–64)

Having failed in his ambition to become a mandarin, Hong turned to religion. Subject to hallucinations and inspired by a distorted grasp of the Christianity he had learned from missionaries, he claimed to be a younger brother of Jesus Christ.

KEY TERM

Taiping The Celestial Kingdom of Heavenly Peace.

It is doubtful that many of the superstitious peasants who joined Hong ever understood his weird theology. Nevertheless, through force of personality and by playing on the economic grievances of the peasants and their dislike of the Manchu, Hong gathered a force of some 20,000 followers by 1850. By 1853, with their army growing in numbers and strength, the Taiping had repulsed all the government's attempts to contain them and had reached and taken Nanjing in a blood orgy during which they killed their 30,000 Manchu prisoners. It was at Nanjing that Hong Xiuquan proceeded over the next decade to construct a communist community based on strict notions of equality and shared resources. However, to maintain such ideals the Taiping resorted to the most restrictive methods of control, including torture and beheadings. The severity of the rule was a factor in the imposition of Taiping control over a large area of southern China. By the early 1860s, the Taiping army had grown to over half a million.

It is interesting that the religious aspect of the Taiping movement had at first appeared attractive to many of the foreign missionaries. But such sympathy as they initially felt soon evaporated when the ferocious methods used by the rebels to enforce control became impossible to ignore. A similar change of attitude occurred among Westerners in China. Prepared in the first instance to look favourably on the rebellion since any threat to the Manchu government increased Western influence over it, the British, French and Americans then turned against the rebels when the disorder caused by the rebellion threatened Western interests.

Disturbed by the scale of the challenge to the imperial rule presented by the rebellion (see the map on page 19), the imperial government was initially slow

to react, but then steadily amassed its own huge army. Organised by Zeng Guofan (see page 26) and drawing on the expertise of foreign mercenaries, such as the English commander **Charles Gordon**, the Manchu forces were able to break attempts by the Taiping to seize Shanghai in 1860 and 1862. The failure to take Shanghai, which owed much to the British presence there, marked the beginning of the end of the rebellion. Internal dissensions, often involving the assassination of opponents, saw the movement gravely weakened. Nevertheless, it took another three years before the Taiping were finally overcome, a result which led to Hong's suicide in Nanjing in 1864.

KEY FIGURE

Charles Gordon (1833–85)

A British army officer who gained the title 'Chinese Gordon' for his success in leading a Manchu government force in suppressing the Taiping.

Reasons for the failure of the rebellion

- The brutality of Taiping methods alienated many Chinese, who might otherwise have shown sympathy for the movement.
- Dissension within the Taiping ranks weakened the planning and development of the rebellion.
- The Taiping remained a movement of the peasants, never winning over the influential gentry who turned against it.
- Having been initially stunned by the rebellion, the Manchu government recovered its nerve and showed resolution in suppressing the Taiping.

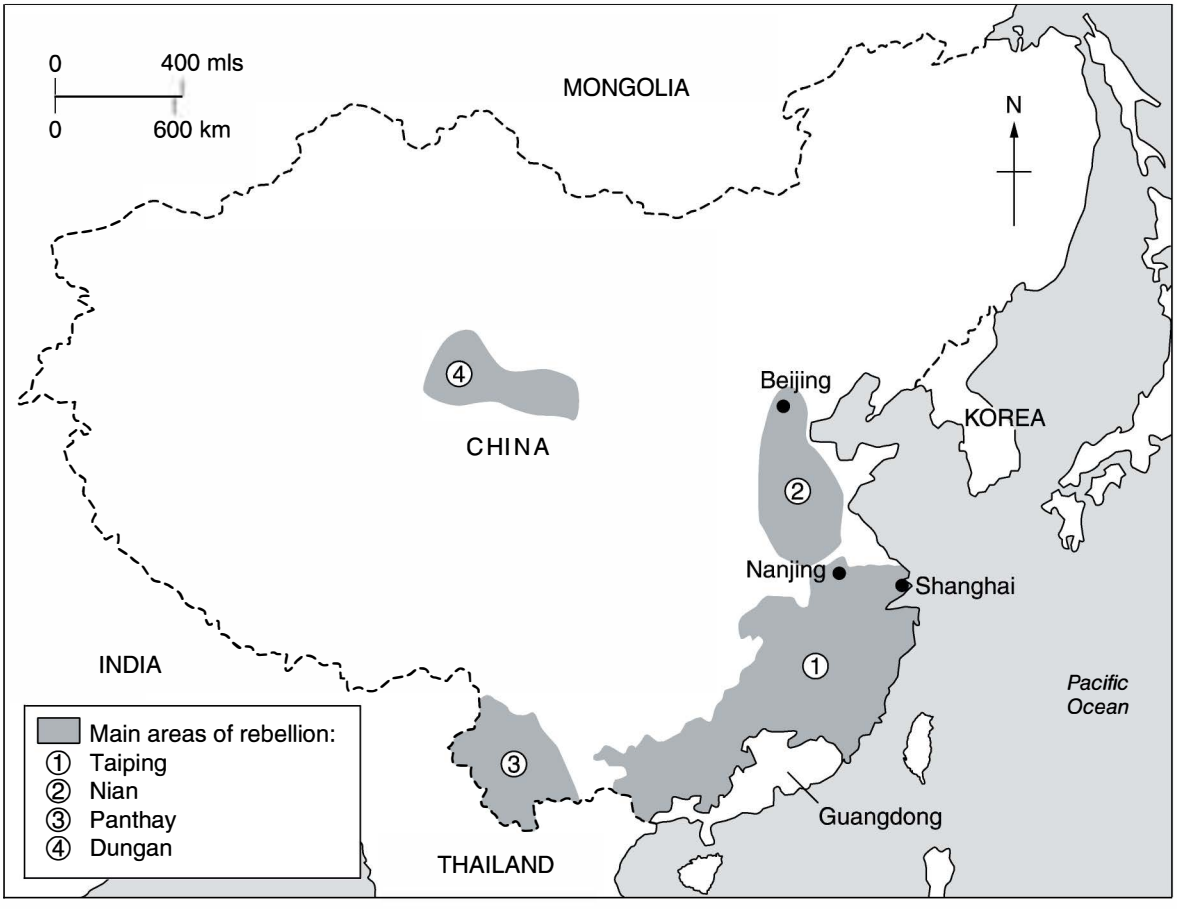


Figure 1.3 Map of the anti-Qing rebellions.

- Britain and France turned against the Taiping when the disruption that accompanied the rebellion threatened British and French interests in China.
- Zeng Guofan showed remarkable skill in organising Manchu military resistance to the Taiping.
- Western military commanders, especially General Gordon (Britain), August Protet (France) and Frederick Ward (USA), assisted in suppressing the rebellion.

Further risings

Despite its eventual failure, the Taiping rebellion also inspired a series of further risings against the Qing. Among the most troublesome were the following:

- The Nian Rebellion (1853–68) occurred in northern China in the regions between Beijing and Nanjing. Essentially a protest against the Qing reluctance to provide funds for repairs following devastating Yellow River floods, it eventually failed through its inability to link effectively with the other rebellions.
- The Panthay Rebellion (1856–73) took place in Yunnan province in south-western China as a movement among Muslims against Qing oppression. With French assistance and playing on divisions among the rebels, the Qing suppressed the rising with great severity.
- The Dungan Rebellion (1862–77) was not primarily aimed against the Qing, although the disturbance caused considerable worry to the imperial authorities. Centred in the province of Gansu, it was essentially a confused set of local struggles between rival groups of Muslims and Han Chinese. It took fifteen years before the rebels were beaten and scattered, many of them making their way to Russia.

Chapter summary

In 1839, China stood on the verge of modernity, but it was not a modernity it had chosen for itself. Ruled by an absolute emperor, it was a nation that by age-old tradition believed in its own Confucian-based cultural superiority and regarded the outside world as barbarian. This detachment was severely challenged when it was forced by military and economic weakness, as evident from its defeat in the Opium Wars (1841–60), to open itself to foreign economic and political intrusion. Its Manchu rulers, locked into traditional ways of government, were incapable of preventing a series of unequal treaties being imposed on China, which granted territorial and trading privileges to a number of Western powers. Contemporaneous with the Opium Wars, there occurred a threatening set of internal revolts against the rule of the Qing, the most disruptive of which was the Taiping Rebellion (1850–64). This movement, which took fifteen years to suppress, further illustrated how ill-equipped central government in China was to deal with the reality of a changing world. Growing demands from outside and increasingly political and economic grievances within were combining to place China in crisis.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. What social principles were basic to Confucianism?
2. Why had China's imperial rulers been so drawn to Confucian principles?
3. What powers were wielded by the Chinese emperors?
4. What function did the mandarins perform in imperial government?
5. How did imperial China traditionally see its place in the world?
6. Why was it customary for the Chinese to regard foreigners as 'barbarian'?
7. What role did women traditionally play in imperial China?
8. What weaknesses were there in the agricultural system in Manchu China?
9. Why did the issue of opium imports cause a breakdown in Sino-British relations?
10. What role did Lin Zexu play in the first Opium War?
11. Why did the First Opium War go so badly for the Chinese?
12. What was the significance of the Treaty of Nanjing (1842)?
13. Why was there a second Opium War?
14. What was the significance of the Convention of Beijing (1860)?
15. What were the 'unequal treaties'?
16. What grievances led to the Taiping Rebellion (1850–64) and why did it take so long for the Qing to suppress it?

CHAPTER 2

The opening of China to foreigners 1860–1901

In the aftermath of the Opium Wars, increasing numbers of foreigners came to China, keen to exploit the economic and missionary opportunities that the opening of the country offered. The Chinese sense of humiliation over this led to resentment towards the intruders but also to a desire to modernise China. By the end of the nineteenth century, its attempt at reasserting its independence led China to war with Japan and a further unavailing act of resistance against further foreign encroachment. These developments are examined under the following headings:

- ★ Missionaries in China
- ★ The self-strengthening movement
- ★ The Sino-Japanese War 1894–5
- ★ The Boxer Uprising 1898–1901

Key dates

1861	Cixi became empress dowager	**1897–9**	Western 'scramble for concessions'
1870	Tianjin Massacre	**1898**	100 days reforms
1894–5	Sino-Japanese War	**1898–1900**	Boxer Uprising
1895	Treaty of Shimonoseki Triple Intervention	**1899**	USA's 'open door' policy
1897	Imperial Bank of China founded	**1901**	Boxer Protocol

1 Missionaries in China

▶ *What impact did religious missionaries have on Chinese society?*

The Treaty of Tianjin (see page 13), granting extensive residence rights to foreigners in China, had the immediate effect of encouraging a large influx of foreign missionaries. The clergy, priests and nuns, were now a very visible and growing Western presence.

Status of the missionaries

Christian missionaries had been present in China since the thirteenth century. They had seldom been warmly welcomed, but, since they were few in number,

they were tolerated. They were not seen as a threat until the seventeenth century when the Jesuits, a Catholic order of priests renowned for their dedication and desire to make converts, came to China. There was now a clear danger that if they upset the Chinese authorities they would be deported. However, initially the Jesuits played a shrewd game. Careful not to antagonise their hosts, the priests adopted Chinese clothing and adapted their teaching so that it did not jar with Chinese tradition. The reputation of the Jesuits as educators also brought them to the attention of members of the imperial court, who were impressed by their scientific knowledge and learning, particularly in the area of mathematics. The result was an uneasy Sino-Jesuit relationship, part admiration on the part of the Chinese and part fear that a continued missionary presence might at some point challenge the cultural superiority which was basic to Chinese identity.

By the early nineteenth century, the potential for trouble had grown. Protestant missionaries from Europe and the USA and Orthodox missionaries from Russia had increased the number of foreigners now in China, intent on practising and spreading their faith. No matter how sincere their beliefs and well intentioned their approach, the main aim of such **proselytisers** was to impose an alien creed on the Chinese. This became critically important at the time of the Opium Wars, when the sensitivities of the Chinese were ignored and a humiliating settlement was enforced on them. During the war, many of the beleaguered Westerners had taken refuge in the mission centres in the concession areas in the European-dominated ports, such as Shanghai and Tianjin, a move that suggested strongly to the Chinese that the missionaries were part of that political, economic and cultural dominance to which China was being subjected. Their missions, hospitals and schools, which were to be found in all the major ports and cities which the West had taken over, were a constant reminder that China's traditional ways were under threat.

KEY TERM

Proselytisers Committed believers actively seeking to convert others to their faith.

The language question

Of major importance was the impact of the new languages that foreigners brought to China. In the majority of cases, the Westerners, rather than learn Chinese, expected the locals to learn their languages. Mission schools were set up with the express purpose of teaching English and French. This was a cultural affront to the Chinese since it strongly implied that European languages were in some way superior to theirs. Nevertheless, since the whole curriculum in the schools used English or French as the language of instruction, it became impossible to study unless one learned a Western tongue. Ambitious Chinese who wanted a career for themselves or their children knew that the greatest work opportunities lay with the Western companies which were rapidly establishing themselves in China. The better jobs, for example in administration, business, trading centres and hospitals, were in the Western concessions. This obviously created resentment among the Chinese but a significant number of them suppressed their bitterness and opted to learn a Western language as a necessary first step towards a better life economically. Those Chinese who

chose this path became an elite, despised by many of their compatriots, but in a position to make the best of a situation which the seemingly irremovable presence of the foreigner had imposed on China.

Cultural challenge

The learning of foreign languages necessarily exposed significant numbers of Chinese to other cultures and traditions. For a people who had prided themselves on the uniqueness and superiority of their own culture this was in one obvious sense greatly disturbing. Yet it had a positive side: the Chinese could now appreciate that there were ideas, thought systems and ways of living other than their own that were of intrinsic worth and, therefore, of value to China. It provided an alternative to the dark picture of Western abuse and exploitation. Significantly, the Chinese revolutionaries, who in time would profoundly change China, almost invariably based their approaches on Western ideologies, albeit tempered to Chinese conditions (see page 52).

Chinese resentment towards the missionaries

A common complaint among ordinary Chinese was that in the missionary-dominated Western courts which operated in the foreign concessions they were denied justice while Chinese converts were granted immunity. The resentment this aroused was intensified by the behaviour of the new missionaries who, neglecting to show the same tact as that of the early Jesuits, often adopted a patronising manner in their dealings with the Chinese, treating them as inferiors and making little effort to hide their feelings of disdain towards them. A French Catholic priest gave his view of what he regarded as the typical Chinese: 'He is not particularly clean in his person, habits or surroundings. He has no lofty ideal of life and is deficient especially in the higher moral quality; sense of duty, trustworthiness, public spirit, enthusiasm and active courage'.

KEY TERM

Ancestor worship
An incorrect interpretation of the Chinese practice of respecting the memory of departed members of the family by holding simple ceremonies in remembrance. A more accurate term would be 'ancestor veneration' rather than worship.

A particular Chinese grievance was the missionaries' attempt to suppress the tradition of **ancestor worship**; the missionaries mistakenly thinking the practice was a superstitious attempt to pray to the dead. It is understandable why, in the outbursts of anti-foreigner feeling after 1840, it was the missionaries who were the first targets of Chinese protests. A dramatic example of this occurred in 1870 in what became known as the Tianjin Massacre.

The Tianjin Massacre 1870

The incident began with a series of attacks on missions in Tianjin in which priests and nuns were assaulted. The attacks were occasioned by rumours that the missionaries were paying local gangs to abduct Chinese children, who were then forcibly baptised and held in the Catholic orphanages. After three of the supposed Chinese kidnappers had been arrested and two of them executed,

a crowd surrounded the Catholic cathedral, smashing windows and demanding that the missionaries be arrested. An appeal for help from the missionaries and their local Catholic supporters to the French legation led to an emergency meeting between French diplomats and the Chinese authorities. However, any chance of joint action was lost when the French **consul** treated the authorities with contempt, going so far as to shoot dead one of the Chinese magistrates in attendance. In retaliation the rioters seized the consul, killed him and threw his body into the river.

KEY TERM

Consul The senior administrative official in a foreign legation.

With the riot out of control, the following outrages occurred:

- The Catholic cathedral and four other Christian churches were burned down.
- Two missionary priests and 40 Chinese Christians were killed.
- Ten missionary nuns were raped and killed and their bodies mutilated.
- There were a total of 60 fatalities during the riot.

It required the swift arrival of European gunboats and marines to quell the riot and re-establish order. The angry Europeans in the Tianjin settlements demanded that the Manchu government in Beijing take responsibility. Unwilling to challenge the foreigners at this point, the government bowed before the demand; commissioners were sent to Tianjin on whose orders eighteen of the rioters were arrested and summarily executed. In addition, a special Chinese delegation, led by Li Hongzhang (see page 26), travelled to Paris where, in 1871, it made an abject formal apology to the French government.

Consequences of the Tianjin Massacre

The Tientsin affair had a number of important outcomes:

- The foreign nationals in China were confirmed in their belief that the Manchu government was incapable of providing the necessary order and protection and that, therefore, a strong European military presence was essential to defend their interests.
- The Chinese authorities gave up any claim it had had to control the conduct and spread of foreign missions.
- A growing number of Chinese nationalists were dismayed by their government's failure to stand up for the nation in the face of foreign pressure.
- Foreign fears and Chinese bitterness were to prove potent factors in the growing Sino-European tensions that were to climax at the end of the century with the outbreak of the Boxer Uprising (see page 34).

2 The self-strengthening movement

- *What factors motivated the self-strengthening movement?*
- *Why did it fall short of its objectives?*

The aim of the self-strengthening movement

A major reaction to the increasing Western intrusion into China was the development of a 'self-strengthening' movement, which aimed at introducing economic reforms as a means of preventing further foreign dominance. The movement, which operated in the last four decades of the nineteenth century, was nominally led by the Manchu government, although in reality the Qing were not genuine lovers of reform. The reason the royal court appeared to be progressive was that it was led by the **Dowager Empress** Cixi, the real power behind the throne, who was prepared to go along with the notion of reform since it provided a cover for her desire to hit back at the West. Such success as 'self-strengthening' would have was largely due to the efforts of ministers and officials who were often prepared to brave Manchu disfavour in promoting progressive economic change in China.

Li Hongzhang (Li Hung-chang)

An outstanding figure in the self-strengthening movement was Li Hongzhang (1823–1901). Li was a committed reformer but he was also wholly loyal to the Manchu dynasty. Far from wishing to challenge the existing political structure, his intention was to sustain the dynasty and government by modernising China in such a way that it could both prevent internal rebellion and ultimately match the strength of the foreign powers which had imposed themselves on China. As a protégé of **Zeng Guofan**, whom he succeeded as Governor of Zhili province in 1872, Li, over the next quarter of a century, became widely acknowledged at home and abroad as China's leading statesman. His significance is evident in the range of posts he held and the activities in which he was involved. Among these were:

- *Administration*: Li's governorship of Zhili province, which included the capital Beijing within its jurisdiction, meant that he was at the centre of Chinese affairs. No other court or government official could match his influence.
- *Commerce*: as chief commissioner for China's northern ports, Li was prominent in the arranging of commercial deals with foreign companies and governments.
- *Finance*: judging that commercial profit depended on efficiency and sound finance, Li insisted that all the enterprises for which he was responsible were registered as **joint-stock companies** in which both private and government concerns could confidently invest.

KEY TERMS

Dowager Empress
Equivalent to a queen mother.

Joint-stock companies
Enterprises in which investors become shareholders entitled to receive profits in proportion to the size of their investment; their financial liability to the company is also restricted in proportion to their investments.

KEY FIGURE

Zeng Guofan (Tseng Kuo-fan) (1811–72)
An exceptional scholar, military strategist, provincial governor and a Manchu loyalist, he played a prominent part in the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion. Many of China's most able administrators were trained under him.



Cixi (also known as Yehenara)

1835	Born
1849	Brought to court to be trained as a concubine
1853	Made a concubine of Emperor Xianfeng
1856	Bore the emperor a son, Tongzhi
1861	Became empress dowager
1875	Installed her nephew Guangxu as emperor
1889	Retained power
1898	Rejected 100 days reforms
1900	Fled on failure of Boxer Uprising
1908	Died

Early career

Born the daughter of a lowly official, Cixi was brought to the imperial court as a concubine at the age of fourteen. By force of will and personality she rose to become, as the empress dowager, the effective ruler of China.

Main career

Cixi moved easily in the complex world of court politics, outmanoeuvring real opponents and unscrupulously removing potential ones. From the early 1860s until her death 40 years later, she dominated Chinese government. Although formally supportive of the self-strengthening movement during her time, she was never genuinely committed to it, as she showed when she rejected the 100 days reform programme. Her detestation of foreign dominance in China led her to support the Boxer Uprising, but, with its failure and her flight, she suffered a major loss of prestige from which she and the Manchu never recovered. The foreign victors allowed her to return to Beijing but only on sufferance. Reluctantly backing the idea of reform in the hope of shoring up the dynasty, she had little success. Her death and that of the emperor in 1908 marked the real end of the Manchu dynasty, although it limped on for another four years.

Significance

Although the court politics in which she engaged were intrinsically interesting, they were of little significance except to show how ineffectual the Manchu dynasty had become. Her true importance lay in revealing how incapable the imperial system which she represented was of leading China towards modernity. From time to time there have been attempts to argue that she was a creative force in China and that she helped to lead her country to towards modernity, but the consensus among historians remains that she was a reactionary with little grasp of China's real needs.

- *Textiles*: Li helped to develop China's already successful textile industry by establishing cotton mills in Shanghai.
- *Steamships*: it was also Shanghai that served as the nerve centre of the merchant steam ship company that Li created. His ships collected and delivered goods and food, particularly rice, from and to the main east coast ports and those up river. As a result of Li's initiative, steamships began to replace the cumbersome sailing barges and slow sea-going vessels on which Chinese trade had traditionally relied. The adoption of the steam engine was one of the most impressive examples of China's successful embracing of Western technology in the late Manchu period. It is notable that the imperial government, usually resistant to the spread of industry, gave its backing to the introduction of steamships into the imperial navy.
- *Telegraph*: as a further move towards integration, Li involved himself in the development of the Imperial Telegraph Administration. As a result of his initiatives, telegraph links were established across many of the northern provinces and connections made between the east coast ports and cities.

Railway line extension

- 1896–9 280 miles
- 1900–5 3222 miles

- *Railways*: to help integrate his coal-mining and shipping interests, Li organised the construction of a number of railway lines radiating out from the port of Tianjin.

Li's initiatives in relation to the railways were of crucial importance since they contributed to a major extension of China's east coast lines. China's imperial waterways, with their canals which linked cities and areas of production to the navigable rivers and the sea, had been a remarkable feat of engineering, but they were insufficient to meet the needs of industrial expansion. If manufacturing was to become truly profitable, railways had to be developed.

At first, the Qing government had been opposed to railway extension, claiming that it made foreign intervention in China easier. However, this attitude was reversed in the 1890s after defeat in the war against Japan (see page 32) showed the urgent need for China to have adequate internal transport to move its armies. An imperial decree of 1895 stated that 'the building of China's railways was the most important factor in the maintenance of trade as well as an undertaking which will employ the masses. In view of this, therefore, we have decided to encourage railways in every way, in order to make them an accomplished fact of this empire.' This immediately raised the question of how the expansion was to be financed. The only realistic answer was by foreign loans, a solution which brought the government more problems than it solved (see page 30).

Li Hongzhang's motives

An important aspect of Li's shrewd handling of business was that, although he was careful to claim that everything he did was in the interests of the Manchu government, he did not act formally as a government representative in commercial matters. Although he had been a provincial governor, he remained a private businessman in all his commercial dealings. This gave him a freedom of action as an individual, safe in the knowledge that his economic successes made him indispensable to the regime; he was far more influential and important than any minister or court official.

Given the scale of his activities and the number of competing interests and groups, both Chinese and foreign, with which he had to deal, it was not surprising that he acquired a reputation as a canny, calculating negotiator. Having worked with Li, John Foster, a one-time US secretary of state, referred to him as being 'willing to be double-faced or even ten-faced'.

A key element in Li Hongzhang's approach was his willingness to adopt Western ways in economic matters. He appreciated that little was to be gained from persisting with the earlier Qing belief that China was self-sufficient. It was far better, he judged, to be realistic: the West was patently more advanced in technology and business acumen. This being so, China could not advance unless it copied and applied the successful features of Western capitalism. The underlying aim was, of course, to develop China to the point of parity with the

economically advanced nations, but he considered that this could be achieved only by employing Western ways. To this end, he was prepared to travel abroad to observe first hand how things were done in advanced economies.

Rise of the middle class in the late Manchu period

One of the remarkable consequences of the self-strengthening movement was the stimulus it gave to the growth of the middle class, which, by 1900, numbered around one and a half million, a tiny but highly influential proportion of the population. Previously this class had been composed of lower rank administrators in the central government and local officials in the regions. Over the centuries they had developed as an essential prop in the imperial system. Like their middle-class counterparts in Europe, they developed what they regarded as refined tastes that reflected their status in society. They became the rural **gentry** of imperial China. But the middle class that emerged from the self-strengthening movement was different in character. It was made up of urban-based businessmen, industrialists, financiers, entrepreneurs, merchants and compradors, men who accepted that their wealth depended on cooperating with the foreigners resident in China. This did not mean they were unpatriotic or that they were pro-Manchu, but it did mean that they were wary of supporting ideas or movements for reform that might jeopardise their newly gained privileges.

KEY TERM

Gentry The class below the nobility but above the peasants and workers. In China, this class prided itself on its refinement and good taste.

Sheng Xuanhuai (also known as Sheng Gongbao)

Another especially noteworthy individual who worked to modernise China's economy was Sheng Xuanhuai (1844–1916). Of comparable significance to Li Hongzhang, Sheng became transport minister in the Qing government. Impressed by the evident success of Western business methods in his country, Sheng chose to adopt them as the best means for China to make its own economic advance. He judged that his country's antiquated and sluggish ways of management had to be replaced by an efficient bureaucracy. It was this approach he adopted in all the many organisations and institutions which he founded or for which he became responsible. These included the following:

- banking
- merchant shipping
- ship building
- textiles production
- coal mining
- iron and steel production
- railways
- the telegraph system.

Sheng also used his position as customs controller in Tianjin to simplify the complex system of duties and levies that encumbered China's commerce, thus providing a model for other Chinese regions. A particularly significant move was Sheng's creation of a university devoted to the study of engineering in

which instruction and research were based on the proven successes of Western science. At a local level, Sheng was concerned to develop Shanghai, his home base, as a modern city, taking important steps to improve its infrastructure and port and banking facilities.

Imperial Bank of China 1897

It was in regard to banking that Sheng, as head of what was effectively China's first modern bank, the Imperial Bank of China, attempted to stabilise the nation's financial system. Empowered to issue its own currency, the bank, which was based in Shanghai, was intended to be a first step towards making China independent of the financially exploiting foreign powers. The dilemma for Sheng, however, was that the bank could not function successfully unless it cooperated with the foreign financial houses in China, which was why he was willing to link the new bank with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) whose advice, under its English manager, was then followed in all key financial decisions. Restrictive though this might have been politically, it did not prevent Sheng's bank from achieving a remarkable degree of success. Within its first two years of operation it had attracted considerable foreign investment and had won the confidence of Chinese businesses, as was evident from its opening of branches in a number of major Chinese cities. The Manchu government expressed its confidence by buying bonds from the bank. In 1912, for patriotic reasons following the 1911 revolution (see page 53), Sheng's creation was renamed the Commercial Bank of China.

Despite its early success, the bank's problems were similar to those which faced all Sheng's main initiatives: its aim was to act independently of foreign influence but, paradoxically, a lack of Chinese expertise in key areas made it heavily dependent on foreign input. This was especially obvious in regard to finance. To fund his ambitious railway extension plans, Sheng had to rely heavily on an American advance of $40 million to develop a main line between Canton and Hankou, while the construction of the link between Beijing and Nanjing had to be left in the hands of British financiers. The reality was that China's development, no matter how nationalist it was in inspiration, could be achieved only by adopting the ways of the foreigners who had imposed themselves on China.

Military reforms

Imperial China's military weakness had been evident since the Opium Wars and then even more cruelly exposed by its crushing defeat by Japan in 1895 (see page 32). The military superiority of the Japanese, as this last event had shown, meant that, when the Chinese government looked for ways of improving its armies, it turned to outsiders. Reluctantly, but logically, it approached Japan, a striking part of whose rapid and successful transformation as a nation had been the modernisation of its armed forces. Thousands of young Chinese cadets were sent to study in Japan, among them the future Nationalist leader, Jiang

Jieshi (Chiang Kaishek, see page 69). In China itself, the existing and newly established military academies made Japanese expertise basic to their training programmes. Tokyo's minister in China wrote, 'Let there be no doubt about it; the bulk of China's military affairs will be Japanized. Japanese power, slowly but surely, will spread through the Asiatic continent.'

Attempts to modernise China's navy were also made. As well as buying iron-clad warships, docks were built with the aim of the Chinese building their own vessels. The arsenals which produced weapons for the army were extended to enable the building of marine cannons. Such training, however, came too late for the Manchu regime, which in military as in economic and financial matters was playing catch-up.

Limitations of the self-strengthening movement

The movement did have some striking achievements. For example, in one burst of constructive energy in the years 1890–5, China witnessed the building of three mines, three iron works and seven textile mills. However, such successes were limited to certain parts of China, mainly the northern and eastern coastal provinces. The southern and inland areas remained largely untouched. Furthermore, progressive and well intentioned though the self-strengtheners were, they made up only a tiny proportion of the population. For all their efforts, the movement they led fell short of modernising China on the scale they had hoped. The chief reasons for this were as follows:

- To be fully effective, the self-strengthening movement would have had to embrace a far greater range of reforms than the Manchu were willing to consider. This meant that the self-strengtheners were restricted in what they could do since their loyalty to the regime stopped them from openly pressing for the changes that they knew to be necessary.
- Administrative reforms had been achieved in some areas but the traditional mandarin system still dominated. This remained the case even after the ending, during the 100 days (see page 37), of the Confucian examinations for civil-service entrants.
- Industrial expansion, including iron works and textile factories, was impressive where it happened, but it occurred in only a few provinces, principally Jiangsu, Guangdong, Hebei and Shandong.
- The self-strengtheners were in a minority. They were always outnumbered by the conservative elements in court and government, who regarded modernisation and the adoption of Western ways as a betrayal of Chinese traditional values.
- Despite the efforts to train young Chinese as industrial managers, there were too few of them to constitute a managerial class, another example of imperial China's inability to modernise fully.
- The reform of China's infrastructure was not carried through with the attention to detail and integration that the circumstances required.

KEY TERMS

Entrepreneurialism The dynamic, expansionist attitude associated with Western industrial and commercial activity in this period.

Meiji period The reign of Japanese Emperor Meiji (1869–1914).

- The cultural difference between China and the Western nations was a critical factor. The attitudes that historically had encouraged economic expansion and **entrepreneurialism** among the Western nations had yet to develop significantly in China.

The plain truth was that the Manchu were not genuine supporters of modernisation. Their heart was never in it, a principal reason why so many Chinese nationalists despaired of the regime and turned to thoughts of its overthrow. The self-strengthening movement also gave rise to a misplaced confidence within the government that China could regain some of the prestige it had lost in the face of European encroachment by defeating Japan militarily.

3 The Sino-Japanese War 1894–5

- *Why did China and Japan go to war in 1894?*
- *What impact did the war have on China?*

Sino-Japanese relations

In the nineteenth century, Japan and China had shared a similar attitude to the outside world. Although traditionally hostile towards each other, these oriental neighbours had for centuries regarded themselves as superior cultures, looking on other peoples as barbarians. Consequently, it came as a great shock to both nations when, in the middle years of the century, they were subjected to the power of the European imperial powers and forced to accept a series of 'unequal treaties' that opened their ports to European shipping (see page 12).

Japan's response, in marked contrast to China's, was swift and successful. The Japanese adopted a series of extensive reforms aimed at rapid modernisation along Western lines. This reassertion of national pride is particularly identified with the **Meiji period**. Abandoning the age-old policy of Japanese exclusiveness, the Meiji regime initiated wide-ranging economic, social and political reforms. The most significant change was in regard to the armed services. Militarism became a potent expression of Japan's new self-belief. By the last decade of the century, the Japanese army, structured on the German system, and the navy, modelled on the British, had developed a fearsome military capability.

At every major point of comparison with Japan, political, economic, military and diplomatic, China came second. In the course of the nineteenth century, Japan had became united, prosperous, assertive and able to claim equality with the West. In contrast, China remained fragmented, bankrupt and at the mercy of the West. It followed inexorably that Japan would seek to exploit its superiority by making war.

Reasons for war

The pretext for war was a dispute over Korea, a peninsula which had been traditionally regarded by the Chinese as a **tributary state**. Since 1874, Japan had been increasing its influence over Korea with a view to an eventual complete takeover. The Chinese government had tried to prevent this by developing its diplomatic ties with the ruling Korean royal family. The Sino-Japanese tensions over this had already led to number of clashes between Chinese and Japanese troops. Matters came to a head in 1894 when the Korean king appealed to China to assist him in suppressing an internal rebellion against his rule. The Chinese obliged by arranging to send a force of 8000 troops to Korea. However, before the main body of these had arrived, Japan had sent in its own armed contingents which proceeded to force the king to dismiss his government and replace it with a pro-Japanese administration.

Refusing to recognise the new Korean regime and rejecting as insincere a Japanese offer of joint control of Korea, the Chinese government declared war. The Manchu court was eager for the struggle since it felt that it could not risk the further loss of face that would follow if it failed to counter Japanese aggression. The Manchu declaration of war spoke of China's right to Korea as a tributary state and characterised Japanese actions as those of an expansionist bully.

It was said by some observers that the decision for war was so popular among the Chinese people that 999 out of 1000 of them supported it. Whatever the accuracy of the claim, the grim fact for China was that in the eight months of fighting from August 1894 to April 1895 its forces performed very poorly. Its armies were defeated on land and its fleets scattered at sea. The truth was that China's antiquated military system was incapable of avoiding defeat against the fully equipped and well-trained Japanese forces which, under the Meiji reforms, had adopted modern, Western-style weaponry and tactics. With its morale shattered by a mounting series of defeats, China sued for peace, a move that was followed by its acceptance of the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki.

KEY TERMS

Tributary state A region under Chinese domination and required to make payments to China on demand.

Indemnity Compensation paid by the loser to the victor for the costs of war.

Treaty of Shimonoseki, April 1895

The treaty's main terms were as follows:

- China had to give up all claim to Korea.
- China was required to pay an **indemnity** of $230 million silver dollars to Japan (equivalent to $5 billion at 2016 values).
- Japan took permanent possession of Taiwan, Liaodong in southern Manchuria, which included Port Arthur (Lushun), and the Pescadore islands.
- Japan was given the right to establish factories and commercial premises in all the Chinese treaty ports.
- Chongqing, Hangzhou, Shaxi and Suzhou to be open to Japanese trade.

The Triple Intervention 1895

Disturbed by the Japanese gains at Shimonoseki, three European powers, France, Germany and Russia, made moves to safeguard what they regarded as their legitimate interests in China.

- Russia was the first to take action. Concerned by Port Arthur's falling into Japanese hands, which would deny them access to a key warm-water port, the Russians suggested to France and Germany that they jointly pressure Japan into returning it to China.
- France hesitated initially. Although in a formal alliance with Russia since 1892, it was also on good trading terms with Japan. But, unwilling to be left out of any possible settlement, it agreed to join a diplomatic intervention.
- An ambitious Germany, which had become a nation only in 1871, was anxious for cooperation with Russia since it viewed this as a way of establishing its own territorial claims in China without exciting Russian opposition. For this reason, it agreed to a triple intervention.
- Faced with this united opposition, Japan appealed to Britain and the USA for support. When this proved fruitless, Japan, knowing that if it came to a military intervention it would be overwhelmed by the forces of the three European powers, gave way and agreed to withdraw from Liaodong. In compensation, it received a large Franco-Russo-German payment. But Liaodong was not returned to China; Russia immediately occupied the province, a move that enraged Japan and led within a decade to the **Russo-Japanese War**.
- For China, the dismal outcome of the triple intervention was that it whetted the appetite of the foreign powers for more Chinese territory.

KEY TERM

Russo-Japanese War
A conflict from 1904 to 1905 that resulted in the victory of the Japanese over the Russians and became an inspiration to Asian peoples seeking to match or challenge the Western world.

4 The Boxer Uprising 1898–1900

- *What was the character of the Boxer movement?*
- *Why did it fail in its objectives?*

By 1900, a number of factors had combined to produce an internal Chinese movement protesting against foreign domination.

The 'scramble for concessions' 1898–9

The defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War and the triple intervention that followed opened the way for a number of Western powers to tighten their hold on China. In the late 1890s, in the 'scramble for concessions', they forced the Chinese to enter into a further series of 'unequal treaties', in which the European nations extended their territorial and commercial interests in China.

SOURCE A



How effectively does Source A capture the character of the scramble for concessions?

A French cartoon published in *Le Petit Journal*, 16 January 1898. An appalled Chinese mandarin watches as China is carved up among Britain, Germany, Russia, France and Japan.

- In 1898, Britain consolidated its hold on Hong Kong, which consisted of three distinct areas: Hong Kong island, Kowloon and the New Territories. In 1842, in the Treaty of Nanjing, China had been forced to cede the island of Hong Kong to Britain in perpetuity (see page 12). In the 1860 Convention of Beijing (see page 14), the Qing government had granted Britain, again in perpetuity, possession of Kowloon harbour directly facing Hong Kong (see page 36). In 1898, Britain took over the rest of Kowloon peninsula. This fresh acquisition, known as the New Territories, was not ceded permanently but on a 99-year lease. This completed the creation of Hong Kong as a British colony.

- Britain also claimed possession of the port of Weihaiwei in Shandong province. This was motivated by a wish not to create a colony, as in Hong Kong, but to establish a naval base and coaling station as a means of protecting British interests against Russia and Germany in the China seas. The agreement granting Weihaiwei to Britain stated that it would remain in British hands as long as Russia held Port Arthur.
- In a similar move, between 1898 and 1899, Germany took over the port of Qingdao in Shandong province and claimed the right to control the railways in the region.
- Not to be outdone, France in the same period obliged the Chinese government to recognise French special interests in areas in an arc of southern provinces in China: Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan.

China's northern and eastern neighbours were quick to exploit the situation. Japan, fresh from its victory over China in 1895, but smarting at its loss of Liaodong, asserted the right to full control of Korea. Russia responded to these moves by strengthening its influence in Outer Mongolia and Manchuria, and claiming Port Arthur (Lushun).

The USA's 'open door' policy

What saved China from further fragmentation during the European scramble was the attitude of the USA, which, despite its **anti-colonial tradition**, had begun to develop its own brand of imperialism. The USA had played no part in the **scramble for Africa**, but it was determined to assert itself in the Pacific

KEY TERMS

Anti-colonial tradition From the time of its founding as a nation in 1776, the USA had condemned all forms of colonialism, the takeover of a weaker country by a stronger.

Scramble for Africa In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the greater part of Africa had been colonised by the competing European powers, principally France, Germany and Britain.

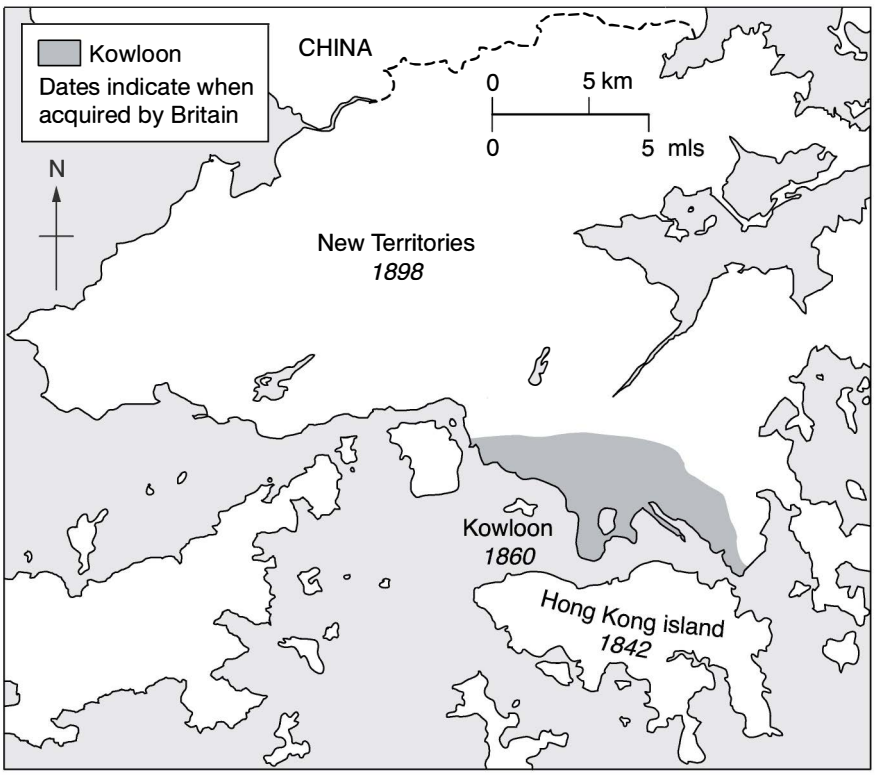


Figure 2.1 Map of the Hong Kong colony.

region. Eager to supplant the other powers, it adopted a policy for preventing the same subdivision of China as had occurred in Africa. Through its secretary of state, John Hay, the USA in 1899 warned off the other imperial powers. In diplomatic but unambiguous terms, Hay informed them that America was not prepared to see China's economy fall under their control. No country was entitled to force the Chinese to grant it preferential tariffs; China must be left free to develop its trade and commerce with whom it chose. Although few of the powers were happy with this **'open door'** doctrine, which they knew was formulated primarily to promote American interests rather than those of the Chinese, none was prepared at this stage to challenge the USA directly over it.

The Qing response to foreign encroachments

Desperate to deflect the criticisms directed at it for its powerlessness in the face of foreign demands, the Qing government resorted to a series of reforms that became known as the '100 days'. The measures, which were all based on Western models, included:

- major modifications of the civil service
- innovations in education
- extensive industrial reorganisation.

The aim behind the reforms was to buy off the government's Chinese critics who had been angered by the pitiful performance of the imperial armies in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and Manchu failure to prevent the subsequent scramble for concessions. The progressive elements around Emperor Guangxu (Kuang Hsu) had persuaded him that reform would convince the Chinese people that the imperial government was still in control. Unfortunately for him, the progressives were outweighed by the reactionaries who were predominant in the government. The Empress Dowager Cixi and her ultra-conservative faction overawed the emperor and outmanoeuvred his supporters. Appalled by the speed and range of the attempted reforms, Cixi, in effect, took over the government. Guangxu was obliged to retract his former support of the reformers, all of whom were dismissed, many of them being executed or imprisoned.

What the failure of the 100 days had revealed was both the crippling lack of cohesion among the advocates of reform in China and the strength of conservatism in Chinese politics. These divisions were to persist as a constant feature of China's history in the first half of the twentieth century.

Cixi, whose distaste for reform was matched by her detestation of foreigners, now attempted to use the national feelings that the 100 days had generated to launch a nationwide campaign against the **'foreign devils'** in China. She gave her backing to the **Boxers**, a collective term for an assortment of anti-Western secret societies, which viewed the Christian Church as their chief enemy. Beginning in 1898, the Boxers launched a series of violent attacks on Chinese

KEY TERMS

'Open door' The American policy aimed at preventing European powers imposing unfair commercial agreements on China.

'Foreign devils' An expression used by many Chinese to denote their hatred of the Westerners who dominated China.

Boxers (*I-ho ch'uan*) Anti-Western secret societies, whose name derived from the martial arts they practised.

Christians and foreign missionaries. These soon extended, with unofficial court approval, into indiscriminate assaults on Westerners.

The Boxer Rebellion

1895	Defeat of China by Japan; Treaty of Shimonoseki
1897–9	Western 'scramble for concessions' in China
1898	Beginning of Boxer attacks on Christians in Shandong
1899	USA declared its 'open door' policy
1900	Boxers reach Beijing
	Siege of the Legations
	International force relieves Beijing
	Emperor and Cixi flee to Xian
1901	Boxer Protocol imposed on China

The Boxers (*I-ho ch'uan*)

The full title of the movement was the Society of the 'Righteous and Harmonious Fists'. This clumsy English translation refers to the Boxers' ritual shadow boxing, a type of calisthenics derived from traditional Chinese exercises. It survives today in the form of Kung Fu fighting. The Boxer movement as it developed was an alliance of three main groups:

- Peasants and workers. During the 1890s, a series of harvest failures and a mixture of droughts and floods, combined with China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 (see page 32), made the chronically insecure lot of the ordinary Chinese even more precarious. They regarded the natural disasters that destroyed their crops and their livelihood as the result of spells and curses cast on the Chinese people by the foreign devils, most evil of whom were the Christian missionaries.
- A section of the Chinese gentry, who felt increasingly humiliated by having their professional status stolen by the barbarous foreigners who denied them position and office.
- The reactionary Qing government, eager to reclaim its independence from Western control and recover from its loss of prestige over China's defeat by Japan in 1895 and the scramble for concessions.

The Boxers defined their targets as 'hairy men', whom they put into three categories:

- 'first-type hairy men': foreign Christians
- 'second-type hairy men': Chinese Christians
- 'third-type hairy men': Chinese who worked for the Westerners.

The Boxers' anger was a compound of national and religious frustration. They declared: 'Catholics and Protestants have vilified our Gods, deceived our Emperors and oppressed the Chinese people below. This has angered Heaven

and Earth, rain-clouds no longer visit us; but 8 million Spirit Soldiers will descend from Heaven and sweep the Empire clean of foreigners.' Considerable superstition was bound up in the Boxers' attitudes. They claimed, for example, that foreigners had damaged 'the veins of the dragon [China]' by building railways across China and had wasted 'the precious breath' of the land by opening mines. The Chinese had always identified breath with the life force. Just as an individual depends on breathing to survive, so, too, the land needs to retain its breath so that it can continue to be fruitful.

The superstitious attitude of many Boxers was also evident in their belief that they possessed magic powers which would preserve them from injury in warfare. They shunned using firearms, believing that lances and swords, when wielded by the righteous, could overcome all enemies. It was indeed true that by training their stomach muscles and going into a trance, many Boxers had achieved an extraordinary ability to resists knife and sword thrusts. However, they were to learn tragically that muscle control was no protection against the rifle bullets fired by the foreign devils.

The 'Shining Red Lanterns'

A remarkable feature of the Boxer movement was the presence within it of special women's units. This was one of the first times in Chinese history that women had played such an organised and significant collective role as a social force. They were known as the 'Shining Red Lanterns' and their contribution to the uprising can be gauged from Source B, in which their objectives are described by a number of eyewitnesses.

SOURCE B

From the recollections of eyewitnesses, quoted in Pai-kai Cheng and Michael Lestz, editors, *The Search for Modern China*, W.W. Norton, 1999, pp. 185–6.

When I was ten, I went to Fenglou to watch people play with the Shining Red Lantern. Their practice ground was set up in a house and it was really exciting and crazy! All these big girls were dressed from head to toe in red. Their footbinding cloths were red, their socks were red their shoes were red, their pants were red, their shirts were all red and they wore a red hair wrapping. Why even the little string to tie on the head wrapping was red! They carried red lanterns and waved red fans. Sometimes they practiced during the day and sometimes at night. They were all girls from poor families. Some couldn't afford to buy red clothes so they tore off strips of cloth from their bedding and dyed it to make their red costume.

Girls who joined the Boxers were called 'Shining Red Lanterns.' They dressed all in red. In one hand they had a little red lantern and in the other a little red fan. They carried a basket in the crook of their arm. When bullets were shot at them they waved their fans and the bullets were caught in the basket. You couldn't hit them! Some were also possessed by spirits and would say that they were Ma Guiying or Hu Jinchan [heroines in Chinese legend].

According to Source B, what were the aims of the members of the Shining Red Lanterns? ?

In every village there were girls who studied the Shining Red Lantern. In my village there were eight or ten of them. They all carried a red lantern in their right hand and a red fan in their left hand. They'd wave their fans and go up into the sky. They didn't want people to watch so they'd practice at night when it was dark. There was a song then that went:

'Learn to be a Boxer, study the Red Lantern.
Kill all the foreign devils and make the churches burn.'

The uprising

The Boxers began their attacks on the 'hairy men' in 1898 in Shandong, a province in which resentment of the 'foreign devils' was particularly marked. The following figured among the reasons:

- the large number of foreigners in the province
- the large amounts of territory that had been taken over by non-Chinese
- the spread of railways and the building of mines, which had offended local sensitivities
- the interference in local customs and traditions by domineering Christian missionaries.

Having gained a high degree of control over Shandong by 1900, massacring thousands in the process, the Boxers set their sights on Beijing. The capital was reached in the summer of 1900, at which point Cixi, now assured that the movement was not anti-Manchu, announced the government's support for the Boxers, declared war on the foreign nations in China and ordered an attack on the international settlements in Beijing. What followed showed that she had badly misjudged the situation. Her appeals to the regional governors to send troops to Beijing to form a Chinese army were largely ignored. The reality was that the government in Beijing had neither the strength to enforce compliance from the provinces in the south and south-east nor the prestige to attract their help. It was a clear sign that loyalty to the Manchu was confined to the northern provinces. Without provincial support, Cixi's war on the foreign powers had no chance of succeeding. Indeed, rather than assist the government, a number of provincial leaders made common cause with the foreigners by promising to protect Western nationals.

It is true that for a 55-day period between June and August 1900 the foreign legations in Beijing were besieged and that the first force sent to relieve them was turned back, but the Western powers within a short time had raised an international army. This included an American contingent since the USA, while anxious to maintain its open door policy, was not prepared to countenance a Chinese rebellion which threatened American interests. Over 50,000 foreign troops were assembled in an **Eight Nation Alliance**, with the largest contingent, 20,000, provided by Japan. Once this international force had reached Beijing, it had little difficulty in breaking the siege of the legations. The Boxer

KEY TERM

Eight Nation Alliance
(The title by which the Boxer Uprising is still known in China.) Composed of Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the USA.

army crumbled before it. Cixi and the emperor fled for their lives south to Xian (Sian) in Shaanxi province.

Reasons for the failure of the Boxer Uprising

- The Boxers attracted only limited support within China. The movement was restricted to the northern provinces and made little impact elsewhere. The southern provinces showed their jealously and dislike of the government in the north by refusing to cooperate in the anti-foreigner challenge. Many of the Chinese provincial and military leaders acted out of self-interest. They ignored the Manchu government's call for a united Chinese resistance, choosing instead to cooperate with the foreign powers by protecting their nationals against the Boxers.
- The Boxers lacked a sense of common purpose. Their movement was made up of separate groups with little to unite them, save for a common hatred of foreigners. As a consequence, the Eight Nation Alliance found it relatively easy to scatter them.
- The movement failed to acquire an inspiring leadership. Despite the Boxer slogan 'support the Manchu – attack the foreigner', the Manchu were more fearful of peasant rebellion than of Western domination. Cixi did have a genuine hatred of the foreigner but the regime had compromised too often with Western demands for it to be seen as the saviour of China. Its support for the Boxers smacked of expediency, not conviction.
- The Chinese gentry, unwilling to contemplate the Chinese masses' encroaching on their traditional privileges, declined to give the Boxers their full backing.
- A particularly important factor was that China did not possess the firepower to match the military strength of the foreign armies.

Consequences of the Boxer Uprising

A number of momentous results followed from the uprising and is suppression.

The Boxer Protocol 1901

Having crushed the uprising, the Western occupiers imposed severe penalties in a settlement known as the Boxer Protocol, whose main terms included the following:

- China had to pay the equivalent of £68 million in reparation. This was distributed in the following proportions: Austria-Hungary 1 per cent, USA 7 per cent, Italy 7 per cent, Japan 8 per cent, Britain 11 per cent, France 16 per cent, Germany 20 per cent and Russia 29 per cent.
- Chinese arsenals and fortifications were to be destroyed.
- Foreign troops were to be permanently stationed in and around Beijing.
- The foreign powers were entitled to defend their legations with their own military forces.

- The legation areas were to be reserved for the exclusive habitation and use of the foreign personnel. Chinese were not to enter them except by invitation.
- The captured Boxer leaders and the government officials who had supported them were to be punished by execution or deportation.
- Cixi was declared to be a war criminal.
- The Chinese gentry were punished by having the traditional state examination, their *entrée* into public office, suspended for five years.
- The Chinese government was to erect a number of monuments commemorating prominent foreigners who had died during the uprising.

Sino-Western hostility

The basic antagonism between China and the foreign occupiers was deepened by the uprising and its suppression. The atrocities committed by the Boxers were real enough but their extent was greatly exaggerated by the Western press which, in its reports, played on European prejudices about the 'wily Orientals'. The popular literature of the day nurtured the idea of the Chinese as an inscrutable and dangerous people; Chinese frequently appeared as frightening characters in the comic books and novellas of the time. Western readers easily accepted that the Boxers were a barbarous and dangerous movement. It was the German Kaiser William II who first coined the term 'the yellow peril', a reference to the supposed threat that the ever-expanding Chinese population presented to the rest of the world.

What the readers were not fully informed on was the barbarity of the foreign armies which put down the Boxers. The excesses of the Boxers were more than matched by the brutality of the conquering Western troops. Von Waldersee, the German field marshal, who was appointed commander of the international force sent to lift the siege of the legations, received the following instruction from the kaiser: 'You know that you are to fight against a cunning, well-armed, and cruel enemy. When you encounter him, no quarter will be given. Prisoners will not be taken. Exercise your arms such that for a thousand years no Chinese will dare to look askance at a German.'

Waldersee carried out his instructions ruthlessly; the forces under his command subjected the areas they occupied to a reign of terror. Chinese civilians were raped and killed and premises were destroyed. The Germans were far from being the only perpetrators. Every nation of the eight-power alliance had troops who behaved savagely towards the Chinese. An American observer recorded: 'The conduct of the Russian soldiers is *atrocious*, the French are not much better and the Japanese are looting and burning without mercy. Women and girls by the hundreds have committed suicide to escape a worse fate at the hands of Russian and Japanese brutes.' Writing in a similar vein, a British journalist declared, 'there are things that I must not write, and that may not be printed in England, which would seem to show that this Western civilization of ours is merely a veneer over savagery'. It was little wonder that in Chinese thinking,

SOURCE C



Study the photo in Source C. Why are there both Japanese and Chinese troops among the watching soldiers?

A Japanese officer wipes his sword after beheading a number of defeated Boxer prisoners in 1901.

the suppression of the Boxers joined the Opium Wars as a definition of Western barbarism.

Damage to the regime

After the Boxer Protocol had been signed, the Manchu dynasty was allowed to continue and the war-criminal charge against Cixi was withdrawn. But events had destroyed what little prestige she still had. Cixi's support of the Boxers had proved as unwise as it had been ineffectual. The failure of the uprising was a profound humiliation for the imperial court. When the emperor and Cixi returned to Beijing in 1902 it was an inglorious affair. There was little popular sympathy for them. Those Chinese who were prepared to fight for their nation's freedom from foreign control regarded recent events as proof that the imperial government was incapable of leading the people to liberation.

The character of the Boxer Uprising

The Boxer Uprising can now be seen as a compound of religious, cultural, national and economic frustration. Marxist historians once sought to interpret it in dialectical terms, arguing that it represented the class struggle of the burgeoning Chinese proletariat against the reactionary forces of the Western capitalist occupiers and their compradors. Few historians hold that view now. There are, however, grounds for assessing it as an early example of an anti-colonialist struggle. But perhaps the most accurate definition is to describe the Boxer movement as yet another in the long series of desperate peasant rebellions that occurred throughout the history of imperial China.

Chapter summary

The defeat of the Chinese in the Opium Wars and the onset of a series of unequal treaties provided the cue for the international powers to increase their infiltration into China. A key feature of this was the growing number of Christian missionaries. While this brought some educational and medical benefits, the reaction of most Chinese was resentment at the intrusion into their midst of a body of very visible clergy whose purpose, whatever their goodwill, was interpreted as the undermining of traditional Chinese beliefs and customs. Local bitterness led to outbursts of anti-missionary violence. In reaction against the dominating foreign presence, a self-strengthening movement arose which aimed at creating the economic and administrative basis to modernise China. The movement was of limited success but it produced a false confidence that Japan could be defeated militarily. In the resultant war, China was overwhelmed, an outcome that encouraged the powers to make further grabs of Chinese territory in the 1890s. In the Boxer Uprising, China made a last desperate effort to break the foreign grip, only for the powers to send an eight-nation army that brutally suppressed the Boxers and imposed a humiliating settlement on the Chinese.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. Why did religious missionaries arouse resentment among the Chinese?
2. What led to the Tianjin Massacre in 1870?
3. What consequences followed from the Tianjin Massacre?
4. What factors inspired the development of the self-strengthening movement?
5. What were the main achievements of the self-strengthening movement?
6. From what weaknesses did the self-strengthening movement suffer?
7. How significant was the contribution of Li Hongzhang to China's economic development?
8. In what ways did Sheng Xuanhuai contribute to the self-strengthening movement?
9. How did Cixi view the self-strengthening movement?
10. In what ways did the Chinese middle class change in the late Qing period?
11. How did China become involved in war with Japan in 1894?
12. What did China lose by the Treaty of Shimonoseki?
13. How did the triple intervention of 1895 impact on China?
14. In what ways was China a victim of the scramble for concessions 1898–9?
15. What was the 100 days programme intended to achieve?
16. Who were the Boxers?
17. Why did the Boxer Uprising fail?
18. What were the consequences for China of the Boxer Protocol of 1901?

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1 How far was the presence of Western missionaries responsible for growing anti-foreigner feeling among the Chinese people in the years 1860–1900?

2 How far do you agree that the Boxer Rebellion (1898–1900) was defeated because the rebels gained little support from the Chinese people?

3 How accurate is it to say that in the years 1860–1900 'the unequal treaties' imposed foreign control on imperial China?

SOURCE ANALYSIS QUESTION

1 Assess the value of Source B (see page 39), for revealing the character of the Shining Red Lantern and its involvement the Boxer Uprising. Explain your answer, using the source, the information given about its origin and your own knowledge about the historical context.

INTERPRETATION QUESTION

1 Evaluate the interpretations in both of the passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an assessment of the causes and composition of the Boxer movement.

PASSAGE A

The Boxers United in Righteousness, as they called themselves, began to emerge as a force in northwest Shandong during 1898. They drew their name and the martial rites they practised from a variety of secret-societies and self-defence units that had spread in southern Shandong during the previous years, mainly in response to the provocations of Western missionaries and their Chinese converts. Some Boxers believed they were invulnerable to swords and bullets in combat and they drew on an eclectic pantheon [wide-ranging collection] of novels, and street plays. Although they lacked a unified leadership, Boxers recruited local farmers and other workers made desperate by the disastrous floods that had been followed by droughts in Shandong; they began to call for the ending of special privileges enjoyed by Chinese Christian converts and to attack both converts and Christian missionaries. By early 1899 they had destroyed or stolen a good deal of property from Chinese Christians and had killed several converts in the Shandong–Hebei border area, seriously alarming the foreigners.

By spring 1900, the year their leaders had predicted as the dawn of a new religious age, the Boxers had expanded dramatically. Perhaps 70 per-cent were poor peasants, male and young. The rest were drawn from a broad mixture of itinerants and artisans: peddlers and rickshaw men, sedan-chair carriers; some were dismissed soldiers and salt smugglers. They were joined by female Boxer groups, the most important of which was named the Red Lanterns Shining. With the empress dowager and senior Manchu officials now clearly behind them, the Boxers launched a series of attacks on mission compounds and on foreigners.

(Adapted from Jonathan Spence, The Search for Modern China, *W.W. Norton, 2001.)*

PASSAGE B

The Boxers combined extremism and loyalty, drawing on old folk traditions and seeing themselves as a divine army marching to eradicate the demons threatening their country. In this, they resemble both the Taiping and the Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s. In each case, there were important differences – the Boxers were pro-dynasty unlike the rebel Taipings, and were a rural phenomenon unlike the mainly urban Red Guards. But the similarities are also striking, particularly between the Boxers and the youth unleashed by Mao Zedong. Just as the Red Guards attacked what they saw as a corrupt Communist elite but venerated the Chairman, so the Boxers turned on oppressive officials, but dedicated themselves to the Qing. In each case, the senior bureaucracy on which the regime depended was appalled, and the outcome left the supreme power badly bruised, bequeathing a legacy to be held up as a terrible warning of the price of anarchy and heightening the fear of people power among the members of China's elite.

The Boxers presented the court with a major problem. They were an obvious threat to authority and order. Their rituals linked them to subversive secret societies and cults. But ambivalence was evident. Ragged and unorganized as they were, the young men who were surging through the provinces were obvious candidates to become the dedicated foot soldiers the dynasty lacked.

(Adapted from Jonathan Fenby, The Penguin History of Modern China 1850–2008, *Penguin, 2008.)*

CHAPTER 3

Defeat and revolution 1901–25

After 1901, the Qing dynasty continued to decline until it was overthrown in 1911. The republic that replaced it fared little better under Yuan Shikai, and on his death China slipped into the turmoil of warlordism. Inspired by the 4 May Movement, two major revolutionary parties struggled to take power and re-create China in their own image. These major developments are covered in this chapter under the following headings:

- ★ The downfall of the Qing dynasty 1901–11
- ★ The rule of Yuan Shikai 1912–16
- ★ Warlord China
- ★ The 4 May Movement 1919–27
- ★ The Nationalists (GMD) under Sun Yatsen 1912–25
- ★ The Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

The key debate on *page 55* of this chapter asks the question: Was the Chinese Revolution of 1911–12 'a Revolution against the world to join the world'?

Key dates

1905	Workers' protest against US immigration laws
	Formation of Alliance League
1908	Death of emperor and dowager empress
1911	'Double Tenth' mutiny
1912	Abdication of the Qing
	Republic established
1912–16	Rule of Yuan Shikai
1916	Yuan became emperor
	Death of Yuan after renouncing the throne
1917	Sun Yatsen's GMD government set up in Guangzhou
1919	4 May Movement began
1920	GMD's southern base established in Guangzhou
1921	Formation of the Chinese Communist Party

1 The downfall of the Manchu dynasty 1901–11

▶ *How did the Manchu dynasty try to save itself after 1901?*

The Manchu dynasty survived its defeat in the Boxer Uprising, but only just. After 60 years of failure in the face of Western demands, it had alienated many of its own people and was now living on borrowed time. In a desperate attempt to sustain the dynasty's flagging fortunes, Cixi was prepared to countenance the reintroduction of the reforms which she had previously so vehemently opposed. Constitutional and administrative changes were introduced; among the most striking were the creation of provincial assemblies and the ending of the traditional Confucian examination for civil-service entrants. The intention behind the reforms was clear – to rally support for the imperial government – but the results were not always as intended.

The belated attempt of the Manchu to present themselves as reformers was unconvincing. Chinese progressives saw the reforms as concessions grudgingly granted by a reactionary government. For them, the idea of the Manchu dynasty turning itself into a modern constitutional monarchy was too great a stretch of the imagination. Moreover, the far from negligible cost of the reforms had to be met by increases in taxation, which further alienated the commercial and financial interests on whom they were imposed.

The dissatisfaction of ordinary Chinese in the face of Manchu impotence expressed itself in 1905 when workers engaged in a widespread boycott of American goods. The protest was directed primarily against **US immigration laws**, but it was also intended to embarrass the Manchu government over its failure to take the lead in condemning American policy. The incident was one of a rash of uncoordinated anti-foreigner reactions. The frustrated anger of many of China's Nationalists was strongly expressed in the following appeal (Source A), in which Zou Rong, a young revolutionary activist, called on his compatriots to assert their independence of both the Manchu regime and the foreigners in China:

KEY TERM

US immigration laws
Having earlier invited Chinese labourers into the country to help build the railways (see page 14), the USA in the 1890s had begun to introduce immigration restrictions which specifically discriminated against the Chinese.

SOURCE A

From Zou Rong, *The Revolutionary Army: A Chinese Nationalist Tract of 1903*, quoted in Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, W.W. Norton, 1990, pp. 236–7.

I do not begrudge repeating over and over again that internally we are the slaves of the Manchus and suffering from their tyranny, externally we are being harassed by the Powers, and we are doubly enslaved. The reason why our sacred Han race, descendants of the Yellow Emperor, should support revolutionary independence, arises precisely from the question of whether our race will go under and be exterminated.

? In Source A, what attitude is expressed towards the Manchu government and the foreign powers?

You possess government, run it yourselves; you have laws, guard them yourselves; you have industries, administer then yourselves; you possess armed forces, order them yourselves; you possess lands, watch over them yourselves; you have inexhaustible resources, exploit them yourselves. You are qualified in every way for revolutionary independence.

China's ambivalent attitude towards the West

Chinese protests against Western domination were frequent but largely ineffectual since they lacked leadership and co-ordination. Sporadic machine breaking and sabotage of industrial plant clearly expressed the Chinese workers' objection to foreign control but did little to threaten it. What undermined attempts to develop an effective anti-foreigner movement was the inescapable fact that large numbers of Chinese had come to depend for their livelihood on the Western presence. This was particularly evident in the major cities such as Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai, where thousands of Chinese workers were employed by foreign companies or in the international concessions. Western favours could not be rejected out of hand. Foreign capital and foreign companies provided jobs for the Chinese.

Working conditions

The Western companies exploited their Chinese workers by paying them low wages and obliging them to work in poor conditions. The irony was that many Chinese were prepared to tolerate the poor wages and conditions because the domestic economy had nothing better to offer them. Moreover, the abuse of workers was not something brought by the West. It was traditional in China. The eagerness of peasants to leave the land and work in Western-owned factories indicated how precarious and grim their previous life had been. The same was true of locally owned industries. Chinese bosses were notorious for the harsh treatment of their employees. China's small-scale domestic industries had been run as **sweatshops**. Another important consideration was that the presence of Western companies brought work opportunities to Chinese women, who were now able to supplement the meagre family income. A further positive effect was that Western industrial expansion encouraged the growth of **indigenous** Chinese business. China was introduced to the arts of industrial management and training.

KEY TERMS

Sweatshops Crowded, unhealthy premises at high risk of fire where unscrupulous bosses exploited cheap labour.

Indigenous Developed by local people.

The consequence of China's dependence on foreign companies and finance was the development among the Chinese of a love–hate attitude towards the West. On the one hand, they deeply detested what the foreigner was doing to China. On the other, they found it hard to suppress admiration for the obvious military and technological accomplishments of the West. Many Chinese came to believe that only by expelling the 'foreign devils' could the independence and greatness of China be restored. However, the means of achieving this would be to copy and adapt those very Western qualities which had led to the current

subjection of the Chinese. Since China had no tradition of participatory politics and since its imperial governments were unable or unwilling to lead resistance, the frustration of the Chinese led many of them to the conviction that progress in China was impossible except through revolution.

Influence of Western ideas on Chinese abroad

The wish to adopt Western ways was stimulated by the experience of those thousands of young Chinese who studied abroad. Their exposure to concepts which had become standard in the West, such as specialised training and applied technology, both fired and compromised their nationalism. They began to ask why Western advances had not been achieved in China. In answering their own question they became increasingly resentful, not simply of Western supremacy but of their own national traditions and forms of government which inhibited Chinese progress. Much as they might hate the West, they judged that it was only by a Western path that they could achieve their goals.

The sense of humiliation that the Chinese felt over these developments stimulated the revolutionary movements that developed later in China. The Chinese were bitterly resentful but were incapable of mounting effective resistance. The autocratic but ineffectual imperial government with its centre in Beijing proved powerless to stop Western encroachments. Indeed, successive Manchu emperors and governments compromised with the occupying powers in order to maintain imperial authority within China. No longer could the Chinese hold that they were culturally, politically or scientifically self-sufficient. Such beliefs were undermined by the reality of China's subjection to the West and also by its heavy defeat at the hands of the Japanese in 1895 (see page 32).

There seemed to be a real possibility that China might suffer the same fate as Africa, which was currently being carved up among the European imperial powers in the 'scramble for Africa' (see page 36). In 1904, a British force, having marched into the western border province of Tibet, obliged the Manchu government to recognise Tibetan independence. This, in effect, was an acknowledgement of Britain's control of the region, which in an earlier century the Manchu dynasty had taken great pride in incorporating into China. The Russians, in a similar move at this time, demanded that China recognise their influence in Outer Mongolia. As Manchu power weakened in the first decade of the century the ability of the West to direct Chinese affairs increased.

Yuan Shikai and the regency

KEY TERM

Regent A stand-in who rules until a monarch is old enough or sufficiently capable of taking power.

In November 1908, the plight of the Manchu dynasty suddenly and dramatically deepened with the death within 24 hours of both Emperor Guangxu and Cixi. Both deaths may have been caused by poisoning but the evidence is not clear enough for a definitive verdict. The dynasty was now in the hands of a two-year-old boy, Pu Yi, with the deceased emperor's brother, Prince Chun, acting as **regent**. The moment appeared to have arrived for all those who wished to see

the imperial system enfeebled, if not destroyed. Nevertheless, the new regent endeavoured to preserve the royal house by continuing with the reforms that Cixi had sanctioned. In an attempted show of strength, Prince Chun dismissed from office General Yuan Shikai (Yuan Shih-k'ai), the commander of the Beijing army. Yuan had used this position to become a political threat to the Manchu government. On the pretext that Yuan's war wounds, which had left him with a pronounced limp, made him an undignified presence at court, the regent instructed him to take early retirement. The order, which was deliberately worded so as to make Yuan appear ridiculous, was meant to pay him back for an earlier act of disloyalty to the previous emperor. Yuan hobbled off, vowing retribution.

Prince Chun had intended his actions as a sign of authority, but to opponents of the imperial system the absurd episode was simply added proof of how much of an **anachronism** the royal court had become. It was one thing for the government to dismiss a difficult individual; it was another for it to deal effectively with the growing opposition of whole groups of disaffected Chinese. Reforms which did not go far enough politically or economically, but which, nevertheless, increased the burden of taxation, frustrated the entrepreneurial business classes. The large number of tax revolts in China during the first decade of the century was an indicator of the widespread resentment felt towards government policies.

KEY TERM

Anachronism Something out of date and no longer relevant.

The railway question

A particular issue that aroused anti-Manchu feelings was that of the railways. Between 1895 and 1911, there had been a boom in railway construction in China which attracted considerable international investment (see page 30). The expansion of railways and the increase in rolling stock was a nationwide development that promised to bring prosperity to most regions of China. This raised a political problem for the Manchus. If significant amounts of capital went to the localities, this would result in local control of the provincial railways, a prospect that was viewed by Beijing as a dangerous challenge to its central authority. In order to wrest control of China's communication system from the provincial companies, the imperial government undertook what amounted to a railway nationalisation programme; owners would be compensated but not to the full value of their holdings. To raise the capital to meet the costs of compensation the Qing government would increase taxes at home and negotiate loans from the West.

Thus, the Manchu were seeking to keep central control at the cost of increased international indebtedness. To the scandal of displaced owners and deprived shareholders was added the humiliation of further indebtedness and dependency on Western bankers. Chinese businessmen now played their part in organising open opposition to a government that appeared to be willing to sacrifice China's economic interests.

KEY TERMS

Guomindang The Chinese Nationalist Party (shortened to 'GMD' or the 'Nationalists').

Republic A form of government in which there is no monarch and power is exercised by elected representatives.

Sun Yatsen (Sun Yixian) and the Nationalists

It is significant that revolutionary ideas had made their greatest initial headway among the 10,000 Chinese emigrants living in Japan. The Alliance League, the forerunner of the **Guomindang** (GMD), was formed in Tokyo in 1905. Its inspiration and leader was Sun Yatsen (Sun Yixian). Since the early 1890s, Sun had been a fierce campaigner against the Manchu. His basic political belief was that China could not modernise unless it became a **republic**; he regarded the Chinese imperial system as moribund. His anti-government views made him a wanted man in China, with the result that he was in exile for the greater part of the time between 1895, when he had led an abortive rising in Canton (Guangzhou), and 1911. Whenever possible during this period he returned to Japan because he considered that 'there, nearer to China, we could more successfully carry out our revolutionary plans'. In presenting his reform programme (Source B), he drew on his foreign experience and education, which had convinced him that modernisation was possible for China only if it adopted progressive Western political and economic concepts.

? According to Sun in Source B, why does China, despite its reforms, still lag behind Europe?

SOURCE B

From Sun Yatsen's reform proposals sent to Li Hongxhang in 1893, quoted in Pai-kai Cheng and Michael Lestz, editors, *The Search for Modern China*, W.W. Norton, 1999, pp. 169–70.

I have always felt that the real reason for Europe's wealth and power lies less in the superiority of its military might than in the fact that in Europe every man can fully develop his talent, land resources are totally utilized, each object functions to its maximum capacity, and every object of merchandise circulates freely. The full development of personal talent, the total utilization of land resources, the functioning of each subject to its maximum capacity, and the free circulation of merchandise – these four items are the most basic if our nation is to become wealthy, strong, and well governed. For our nation to ignore these four items while concerning itself exclusively with ships and guns is to seek the insignificant at the expense of the basic.

China's territory is large and her natural resources are broad and varied. If we can promote the use of machinery on a nationwide scale, the benefit to the people will be enormous. As long as machinery is not used, our natural resources will remain hidden, and our people will continue to be poor. For all of us who want our nation to become wealthy and strong, the choice is rather obvious.

It has been thirty years since we began to imitate the West. We have schools, as well as military and naval academies, to train specialists in Western affairs. We have mining and textile enterprises to open up financial resources. We have steamship and railroad companies to facilitate transportation. Yet we still lag behind Europe in overall achievement. Why? The reason is that we have not, really, embarked upon the completion of the four tasks, as described above. When we do, given China's human and natural resources, we should be able to overtake Europe in twenty years.



Sun Yatsen (Sun Yixian)

1866	Born in Guangdong province
1879–82	Educated in Honolulu, where he learned fluent English
1892	Qualified as a Western-trained doctor
1895–1911	In exile in Europe, Japan, Canada and the USA
1896	Seized in London by Chinese agents but released after British government intervention
1905	Formed the Alliance League, the forerunner of the Guomindang (GMD)
1912	Become president of new republic
	Handed presidency to Yuan Shikai
	Formed the Guomindang (GMD or Chinese Nationalist Party)
1913	Led failed attempt to remove Yuan; fled to Japan
1915	Married Soong Qingling
1920	Supported formation of the Chinese Communist Party
1923	Formally enunciated his Three People's Principles
1924	Founded the Whampoa Military Academy
	Organised the United Front
1925	Died from liver cancer in Beijing

Known as the 'father of the nation', Sun Yatsen was the most influential of the Chinese revolutionaries who sought to regenerate their nation by removing foreign control and reasserting China's independence. It was he who first pushed China towards modernity. Although president of the republic for a brief period in 1912, and leader of the GMD, Sun seldom held real power. His great contribution lay in the field of ideas; he provided a pattern of thought on which other revolutionaries, most notably his protégé, Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) and the Communist leader, Mao Zedong, developed their political programmes. Sun, who had been educated abroad, qualifying as a doctor, wished to see China adopt progressive Western principles, such as democracy, nationalism and socialism. His party formalised these aims as the 'Three People's Principles'. However, so different had the Chinese political tradition been that it is unlikely the Chinese understood or interpreted concepts such as democracy and representative government in a Western sense. However, for Sun and those he led, this did not matter; the appeal of Western ideas lay in their potency as slogans with which China could begin to reclaim its former dignity. As Sun put it: 'The merit of an ideology does not lie in its logic; whether it is good or bad depends upon its suitability to a certain circumstance. It is good if it is beneficial to both China and the world; otherwise it is bad.'

The 1911 Revolution

So serious was the decline in support for the Manchu government that the last years of its life, between 1908 and 1911, may be fairly described as a revolution waiting to happen. All that was needed to topple the Qing was a firm push. This was provided in 1911 by an event known in China as the **Double Tenth**. On that date at Wuhan (Wuchang), a city on the River Yangzi in Hubei (Hupei) province, troops refused to obey an order to suppress a group of dissidents. The incident was of no great moment in itself; local difficulties of this kind had been frequent in recent Chinese history. However, in the charged circumstances of the time, military insubordination took on an added significance.

KEY TERM

Double Tenth The tenth day of the tenth month, October 1911.

A rash of similar mutinies occurred in neighbouring provinces. Seizing the moment, local political revolutionaries joined with the military in defiance of Beijing. By the end of November, all but three of China's provinces south of

Beijing had declared themselves independent of central government control. Events took a further revolutionary turn in November when delegates from the rebellious provinces gathered in Nanjing (Nanking) to declare the establishment of a Chinese republic. Sun Yatsen, who was in the USA and had played no direct part in the events surrounding the Double Tenth, was invited to be the republic's first president. He returned to China and was installed as president on 1 January 1912.

The role of Yuan Shikai

The tottering Manchu government was faced by insurrection and mutiny. If its authority was to be reasserted, a swift and resolute response was needed. But, to achieve this, Beijing would have to call on loyal commanders in the provinces, and these were hard to find. The government had lost military control of the localities. This left only one recourse, to despatch the Beijing army southwards to reimpose the regime's authority. The government appealed to Yuan Shikai, whom it had earlier dismissed, to help protect them by leading the Beijing army. Yuan was willing to do so, but only on his terms. He marched south, easily retaking a number of rebellious regions, but when his army reached Wuhan, the site of the Double Tenth, Yuan deliberately held back from seizing it. His aim was to do a deal with the revolutionaries. The fact was that Yuan had no love for the court which had formerly humiliated him. While pretending to organise resistance to the growing opposition, he used his new authority to betray his masters by plotting their overthrow.

Yuan was in no sense a revolutionary; he was motivated as much by a dislike of republicanism as by his vendetta against the Manchu. He would allow the dynasty to fall, but he had no intention of seeing a republic take its place permanently. His ultimate objective was to resurrect the empire with himself as emperor. It was a matter of personal ambition. He saw in the situation an opportunity to use his military strength to act as arbiter, thus leaving himself in a position of power whatever the turn of political events. The ***quid pro quo*** he offered the republicans was that if they would accept him in place of Sun Yatsen as president he would use his authority to establish a workable constitution and persuade the Manchu to abdicate without further resistance.

No clear account of the negotiations between Yuan and the revolutionaries has survived, but it seems there were misgivings on both sides. However, once Sun Yatsen had expressed his willingness early in February 1912 to give way to Yuan as president, the deal was struck. Yuan then presented what amounted to an ultimatum to the Manchu: abdicate or be overthrown by force. There were some among the courtiers who urged that the dynasty should at least go down fighting, but the regent and Longyu, the dowager empress, refused to contemplate further bloodshed. On 12 February 1912, Longyu issued a formal abdication decree on behalf of Pu Yi, the five-year-old emperor. Longyu declared that 'in obedience to the **mandate of heaven**, I have induced the Emperor to

KEY TERM

Quid pro quo Something for something, a balanced exchange.

Mandate of heaven The force of history that justifies the holding of power by those in authority; a Confucian concept.

yield his authority to the country as a whole, determining that there should be a constitutional republic. Yuan Shikai has full powers to organise a provisional republican government.'

2 Key debate

Was the Chinese Revolution of 1911–12 'a Revolution against the world to join the world'?

'A revolution of the bourgeoisie' or 'a revolution of the provinces against the centre'; which term offers the better interpretation of the Chinese Revolution of 1911–12?

It was evident by the first decade of the twentieth century that even had the Manchu government been genuinely prepared to see China modernised it was not equipped to undertake such a task. Authoritarian by tradition, it was incapable of making the necessary political adjustment, since it rejected the idea of lessening its own power and transferring it to the people. The further the imperial system moved towards reform, the more it revealed its inadequacies. Historians in their analysis of the decline and fall of the Manchu now stress that the underlying economic and social changes that had been occurring in China since the intrusion of the West in the 1840s had rendered the imperial system obsolete long before it actually collapsed.

Historians also emphasise the influence of Japan in pushing China towards modernity. Notwithstanding their dislike of Japanese imperialism, the great majority of Chinese revolutionaries and reformers could not avoid seeing Japan as in some way a model. The ambivalence that the Chinese felt towards the West, a mixture of admiration for what it had achieved and repulsion at what it was doing to China, also applied to Japan. The Japanese were the exploiters of China, yet at the same time they were a powerful example of what an Asian people could achieve once they had undertaken reform, as witnessed in their great victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 (see page 34).

The revolution of 1911–12 was a very Chinese affair. The official statement of abdication declared that the mandate of heaven had passed from the Manchu to the new republic. The imperial family was granted a subsidy and allowed to remain living in the Forbidden City in Beijing. The events of 1911 were only a partial revolution. To the disappointment and anger of Chinese Nationalists, what failed to emerge from the revolution was participatory politics in any true sense. A number of democratic trappings, including a parliament, appeared but the representative principle was never genuinely adopted. A clean break with the past had not been made. Many of the imperial officials continued to hold their posts, and factionalism remained the dominant feature of Chinese politics.

The events of 1911–12 were depicted in Marxist interpretations as a revolution of the **bourgeoisie**, but while China's middle classes may have subsequently benefited from the fall of the Manchu dynasty, there is little evidence that it

KEY TERM

Bourgeoisie Marxist term for the exploiting middle class.

was they who initiated the Wuhan rising. That was essentially the work of the military. It is true that the radicals then took the opportunity to join in but it was on the terms dictated by the military, who remained largely in control of things. A more convincing interpretation of the events of 1911 is to see them as a revolution of the provinces against the centre. The Double Tenth was a triumph of regionalism. It represented a particular phase in the long-running contest between central **autocracy** and local **autonomy**, a contest that was to shape much of China's history during the following 40 years.

KEY TERMS

Autocracy The rule of a single authority; in China before 1912, the emperor.

Autonomy Self-government.

Nanjing One of the GMD's major strongholds in central China.

Consortium A group of financers who draft and monitor loan offers. In this instance, the consortium was composed of members from France, Britain, Germany, Russia, Japan and the USA.

'Dollar diplomacy' America's insistence on unfettered exchange in international commercial and financial dealings.

3 The rule of Yuan Shikai 1912–16

▶ *What problems confronted Yuan Shikai as president of the republic?*

Soon after the Manchu abdication, Sun Yatsen's Alliance League declared itself to be a parliamentary party and adopted the name Guomindang (GMD). Aware of what little power he and his party had in the north of China, Sun was willing to hand the presidency to Yuan Shikai. This was not an act of generosity. Sun's hope was that Yuan Shikai would come south to **Nanjing** to set up a new government. Sun calculated that once Yuan was away from his power base in Beijing it would be much easier to control him and oblige him to honour his commitment to the republic. It was precisely for that reason that Yuan was determined to stay put. His authority was in the north and he was not prepared to weaken it by an ill-judged move. A Nanjing delegation sent to Beijing to provide him with a presidential escort for his journey south had to return without him.

The republicans under Sun Yatsen could do little to restrict Yuan at this stage. Their influence was limited to parts of southern China, whereas the centre of government and administration was in the north where Yuan held sway. Sun Yatsen's republicans had been outmanoeuvred. Whatever the GMD's claims to be a national party, it had a regional influence only. Moreover, unused to open political activity, it continued to operate as the secret society that it had been before the revolution. As Sun Yatsen and some of his more astute supporters acknowledged, the GMD's lack of experience of democratic politics restricted it to a minor role in the early years of the republic.

Yuan was strong enough to overcome criticism and resistance from the GMD. A striking example occurred in 1913 when Yuan, desperate for means to finance his government, completed the negotiation of a large foreign loan. To secure the money Yuan Shikai had to accept the demands of a six-member international banking **consortium**, which had been originally set up in 1911 in the last days of the Manchu dynasty. The USA had been instrumental in the formation of the consortium as part of its **'dollar diplomacy'**, an extension of the 'open door' doctrine (see page 36). In order to further US financial interests, President Taft

SOURCE C



After the abdication of the Qing in 1912, republican troops went round cutting off the pigtails of Chinese men.

What is the act shown in Source C meant to symbolise?

had personally contacted the Chinese government in 1909 to urge them to accept increased American investment.

In 1913, the consortium eventually offered a loan of $100 million (equivalent to $2 billion in 2016 values), but on the following terms:

- China to pledge its future tax revenues as **security** and to place the administration of Chinese finances in the hands of foreign controllers.
- China to recognise Britain's control of Tibet.
- China to recognise Russia's control of Outer Mongolia.

KEY TERM

Security Assets to cover the cost of a loan should it not be repaid. (In this instance, China agreed that if it defaulted on its repayments, its tax revenue would be forfeit.)

It was clear that Yuan's successful negotiation of the loan had been achieved only at the price of a further loss of Chinese independence. Equally significant was Japan's use of its newly won influence with the Western powers to insist that it be included as one of the consortium's members. This was further proof both of Japan's superiority over China and of the West's acceptance of this as a basic fact of international relations.

KEY TERMS

'Second Revolution' An unsuccessful attempt by the GMD to remove Yuan Shikai in 1913.

Impeachment Formal parliamentary censure.

Republicans bitterly condemned the severe terms of the loan and accused Yuan of being as guilty of compromising China's sovereignty as the Manchu had been. In 1913, in an attempted **'Second Revolution'**, the GMD tried to organise armed resistance in a number of the southern provinces. But Yuan rode the storm. Ignoring the GMD's **impeachment** of him for exceeding his presidential powers, Yuan either dismissed the military commanders in the key provinces or bribed them into staying loyal to him. His army then rapidly crushed such resistance as remained. It was clear that the republican parties in China were too ill-organised to mount an effective opposition.

Disappointed by the failure of the Second Revolution, Sun Yatsen fled to Japan in November 1913. He explained the ineffectual showing of the GMD by pointing out that unless the movement reorganised itself as a disciplined, centrally directed body it would be unable to exercise real power in China. It was in Japan that Sun Yatsen now began restructuring his party along these lines. However, for the moment, Yuan Shikai appeared to be in control in China. Having overcome the resistance in the provinces, he sought to consolidate his authority by a series of restrictive measures, which included the following:

- permanent suspension of parliament
- outlawing of a number of parties, including the GMD
- abolition of the regional assemblies, which had been enshrined in the 1912 republican constitution
- bringing of tax revenues under central control
- the requirement that local civilian administrators were directly answerable to Beijing.

Unsurprisingly, such steps excited further opposition in the provinces. Despite Yuan's success so far in imposing himself on republican China, his strength was relative. It relied on the willingness of generals in the provinces to support him. It was also, as the negotiated loan of 1913 indicated, dependent on his ability to raise enough capital to run his government. His financial needs had already forced him to borrow heavily in 1913, a move that had left China with crippling foreign debts.

Japanese encroachment: the 21 Demands, 1915

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 had provided Japan with further opportunity to strengthen its grip on China. Both the Japanese and Chinese had good reasons for offering to help the Western Allies: each hoped to gain the territories which Germany held in the Far East. In response to Britain's

appeal for naval assistance, Japan actively supported the Allies from August 1914 onwards. China, however, did not enter the war until 1917. This gave Japan an obvious precedence over China in Allied eyes. The struggle in Europe also gave Japan a freer hand to interfere in China while the Western powers were preoccupied with their own war effort. In 1915, the Japanese government presented Yuan Shikai with the '21 Demands', a set of impositions that, if fully accepted, would have destroyed China's independence. The following extracts (Source D) indicate the character of the Japanese demands:

SOURCE D

From Japan's 21 Demands, January 1915 (available at: www.firstworldwar.com/source/21demands.htm).

The Chinese Government engages to give full assent to all matters upon which the Japanese Government may hereafter agree with the German Government relating to the disposition of all rights, interests, and concessions which Germany possesses in relation to the Province of Shandong.

The Chinese Government agrees that if it employs political, financial, or military advisers or instructors in South Manchuria or Eastern Inner Mongolia, the Japanese Government shall first be consulted.

The Chinese Central Government shall employ influential Japanese as advisers in political, financial, and military affairs

The police departments of the important places (in China) shall be jointly administered by Japanese and Chinese and the police departments of these places shall employ numerous Japanese

China shall purchase from Japan a fixed amount of munitions of war (say 50 percent or more of what is needed by the Chinese).

How far do the clauses in Source D support the idea that acceptance of the 21 Demands would have meant the end of Chinese independence as a nation? ?

The Chinese appealed to the Western powers for support but received little help. The USA accepted that Japan's 'territorial contiguity' (closeness geographically) with China entitled it to the Chinese areas it claimed. Britain was disturbed by those demands, which it considered would result in too great an extension of Japanese naval power in the Far East, but, once Japan had shrewdly withdrawn those particular clauses, the British insisted that China accept the remainder. Yuan, who, for political and financial reasons, wanted to keep on good terms with Japan and the West, finally gave in to the demands.

Yuan's surrender created a violent outburst of anger among the Chinese. Demonstrations and strikes occurred widely in Beijing and other provincial cities. Significantly, the resentment was directed as much against the new republican government as against Japan. All the main sections of the Chinese community currently dissatisfied with the republic – students, traders, lawyers, teachers and even some local officials – came together in open defiance. Yuan's capitulation to the Japanese had further weakened his position as president and had damaged the reputation of the young republic.



Yuan Shikai

1859	Born in Henan province
1876	First of his ten marriages, during which he fathered 32 children
1876–90	Failed to gain entry to civil service, developed a military career
1885	Appointed Chinese imperial representative in Korea
1895	Recalled to China
	Appointed commander of the New Imperial Army
1898	Played an ambiguous role in attempted anti-Manchu coup
1908	Dismissed from court
1908–11	Plotted his revenge
1911	Following Double Tenth, appointed prime minister in Manchu government
	Did a deal with the rebels and called on the Manchu to abdicate
1912	Became president of the Chinese republic
1913	Began repressive measures against GMD
	Negotiated international loan for China
1914	Attempted to remove all democratic limits on his power
1915	Obliged to accept Japan's 21 Demands
1916	Installed as emperor on New Year's Day
	Abandoned imperial title in March
	Died in June

Yuan Shikai was undoubtedly a self-seeking opportunist but he should not be dismissed simply as a careerist who subordinated China's needs to his own wish for power. Modern historians, while accepting that he was motivated by personal ambition, point out that he did attempt to respond to China's most pressing needs. Despite being eventually overwhelmed by the problems he faced, Yuan's attempts at administrative and economic reform had merit. Arguably, his struggle to impose himself on the localities was a recognition on his part of a vital fact – that unless there was an effective restoration of strong central authority, China stood little chance of developing the cohesion that would enable it to grow into a modern nation state.

Significance

Yuan has been aptly called a 'modernising conservative'. There is also the consideration that while Yuan Shikai had his faults so, too, did his republican opponents. The republic that replaced the Manchus was not well served by the mixture of naivety and corruption that characterised politics in that period. After Yuan's death, events were to show that none of the individuals or parties involved in the early republic had any real answers to China's constitutional and political problems. Whatever Yuan Shikai's failings may have been, he had represented some degree of authority and order. With his passing there was no one capable of preventing China from sliding into further confusion and fragmentation.

Yuan becomes emperor 1916

Yuan's basic problem was that while he was certainly more powerful than any single group or interest in China, his authority was never absolute. His awareness of this pushed him towards the idea of resurrecting the empire with himself as emperor, a position that would give him an authority that he could not hope to obtain merely as president. In response to what he claimed to be a spontaneous appeal from the people, but which in fact had been organised by his supporters at his prompting, Yuan announced late in 1915 that for the sake of the nation he would restore the imperial title and accept it for himself. On New Year's Day 1916, he was ceremonially enthroned as emperor.

It was a hollow triumph. Rather than unite the nation and make his rule more acceptable, Yuan's self-promotion to emperor aroused fiercer and more determined opposition. A succession of provinces declared their independence from Beijing and rose in revolt. More serious still was the defection of the generals in Yuan's own army, who informed him that they would not serve him as emperor. No commander can survive without the loyalty of his officers. Seeing the writing on the wall, Yuan renounced the throne in March 1916. Three months later he was dead, a victim of stomach cancer.

4 Warlord China

▶ *Why did China decline into warlordism after Yuan Shikai's death?*

On Yuan Shikai's death a confused period of infighting among Beijing army commanders followed, from which General **Duan Qirui** (Tuan Chi-jui) emerged as premier. Although his authority was very limited since central rule was breaking down in China, he attempted to crush his opponents by force. This resulted in violent clashes on the streets of Beijing. Hoping to exploit the disturbed atmosphere, General Zhang Xun (Chang Hsun) marched on the capital in June 1917 with the aim of restoring the Qing dynasty. Zhang's efforts ended in confusion and failure and Duan Qirui retained office as premier.

KEY FIGURE

Duan Qirui (1865–1936)
Prime minister of the Chinese republic 1916–20.

The weakness of the republic

The disorder and vying for power at the top that followed Yuan's death in 1916 clearly illustrated that central authority in China had become enfeebled. The republican government under Duan Qirui continued nominally to function in Beijing, but it exercised little real power. It was split between rival factions, the most prominent being the Anhui, the Fengtien and the Chihli, groups named after the regions from which they came. Although they styled themselves parties, none of them represented a clearly defined principle and they were barely distinguishable from each other. They were no more than cliques bidding for power. While the forms of central government remained intact, it was evident that the republic was beginning to fragment.

The weakness of the republican government was most evident in its difficulty in maintaining an army strong and loyal enough to impose central authority on the provinces. It became impossible to sustain civilian government in these areas. As a direct consequence, the local regions fell under the domination of what were, in effect, a series of private armies, whose commanders-in-chief assumed civil as well as military authority. The power of the sword predominated. Within their own provinces, the military commanders or **'warlords'** became autocrats who administered their own legal, financial and taxation systems and invariably became a terror to the local people. The dominance of the warlords for so long in so many parts of China was a commentary on the republic's inability to establish

KEY TERM

'Warlords' Powerful local generals who exploited the weakness of the central government to set themselves up as rulers in their own areas.

strong central government. Rather than create political stability, the republic had produced a political vacuum which the warlords had chosen to fill.

The common military characteristics of their rule has sometimes led to the warlords being regarded as a single movement, but in reality they represented a wide variety of attitudes and aspirations. Yet, whatever their separate aims and individual quirks, the warlords did have one common characteristic: none of them was willing to give up his private army or submit to outside authority. As long as they ruled, China would stay divided. Moreover, in spite of the rare warlord who had genuine concern for the people of the region he controlled, the prevailing pattern of warlord rule was oppression and terror.

The impact of warlordism on China

Warlord authority was inadvertently strengthened by the republic's political divisions. The competition for power between Sun Yatsen's Nationalist government in Guangzhou and the republican government in Beijing meant that neither was strong enough to impose itself on the warlords. Indeed, the reverse happened. To maintain such authority as they had in their respective regions, the Nationalists and the republicans were obliged to compromise with the more powerful warlords and do a series of deals with them, sometimes appealing to them for military assistance.

Although the GMD were later to become the internationally acknowledged government of China, there was little in the early 1920s to distinguish the Nationalists from the other warlord groups. For obvious expedient reasons, foreign governments in seeking to protect their interests tended to liaise with those Chinese leaders who, regardless of their legal status, seemed to have genuine power. One prominent example was Wu Peifu, the warlord of Hubei and Hunan provinces, who defied the authority of Sun Yatsen's Nationalist government in Guangzhou. Another was Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-lin), warlord in the Beijing area, whose power was such that it was he rather than the nominal republican government in Beijing whom foreign diplomats chose to recognise.

Significance of warlordism

The warlord period was important for the reaction it produced. The disunity and distress that characterised the time intensified nationalist feelings in China. This produced a solidarity among Chinese radicals and gave direction and purpose to a revolutionary movement that otherwise might have continued to dissipate itself in factionalism and local rivalries. As evident in the 4 May Movement (see page 63), the humiliation of the nation at the hands of warlords and foreigners gave the Chinese a common sense of grievance. It was this that eventually checked the fragmentation of republican China by providing a cause around which the Chinese could unite. Ultimately, the two major revolutionary parties, the GMD and the Chinese Communist Party (see page 69), would oppose each other in a long and violent struggle, but what united them initially was their shared resentment against warlord rule.

5 The 4 May Movement 1919–27

In what sense was the 4 May Movement an expression of Chinese nationalism?

The most significant consequence of warlordism was the stimulus it gave to the 4 May Movement, an intense and sustained outburst of resentment in China against the Japanese in particular and the imperialist occupiers in general. The Movement was of central importance in Chinese politics between 1919 and 1927 in preparing the ground for the reorganisation of the GMD in 1919 and the creation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. It took its name from the first day of the violent demonstration in Beijing, which followed the news of China's humiliation at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919.

The origins of the 4 May Movement

Anti-foreigner reaction was most notable among China's intellectuals, who, disillusioned by the failure of the 1911 Revolution and the republic to achieve real advances for the country, were further dismayed by the refusal of the West in 1919 to extend the principle of **self-determination** to China.

Western pressures on China 1914–19

To understand China's sense of humiliation in 1919, it is necessary to examine the attitude of the Allied powers – France, Russia and Britain – towards China between 1914 and 1919. At the start of the First World War in 1914, the Allies had urged both China and Japan to declare war on Germany. Japan did so, but then put pressure on the Beijing government to delay its entry into the war. The Japanese motive was to prevent China's improving its international standing. In addition, Japan obtained from the British a secret promise that they would not press for China's entry without first consulting **Tokyo**. Armed with this guarantee, Japan then, in the first month of the war, seized the German territories in China, including Shandong province with its key port of Qingdao. At the time, the Japanese declared that these possessions would eventually be returned to China, but the emptiness of that promise became evident in 1915 when Japan's notorious 21 Demands threatened to reduce China to a Japanese **vassal state** (see page 58).

Britain's reluctance to take China's side at this point arose from its concern to avoid offending Japan as a major war ally. By 1915 it was becoming clear that the European war would be a protracted one. Britain and the Allies simply could not afford to risk losing Japan's support. However, it was this same reason, the mounting demands of the war in Europe, that led the Allies in 1917 to renew their appeal to China to join the hostilities against Germany. Up to that year, the Chinese had maintained their neutrality. If the Chinese were to be persuaded to join the war they would have to be convinced that an Allied victory would guarantee their recovery of the disputed territories that Japan had seized.

KEY TERMS

Self-determination The principle that nations were entitled to shape and plan their own development free from outside interference and direction.

Tokyo Japan's capital city and centre of government.

Vassal state A nation effectively under the control of another.

American involvement

The Americans played a key role at this juncture. Having themselves entered the war against Germany in April 1917, they urged China to do the same, arguing that if the Chinese fought for the Allies this would earn them a place at the post-war conference where they would be in a position to claim their rights. Many Chinese, including Sun Yatsen and the GMD, remained unconvinced by this American analysis. Nevertheless, the Beijing government judged that the USA, which under President Woodrow Wilson had entered the war avowedly 'to make the world safe for democracy', was more to be trusted than the European Allies. Strengthened by a substantial US loan, China formally declared war on Germany in August 1917.

Further Allied exploitation

This time Japan raised no objection, not because it now accepted China's territorial claims but because it had already obtained formal commitments from the Western Allies that they would continue to recognise the priority of Japanese claims to German possessions in China. Furthermore, Britain, France, Russia and Italy had all given secret pledges to support Japan in any post-war settlement. More significant still, the Chinese had already been betrayed from within. Duan Qirui, China's chief representative in the negotiations with the Western powers, had attempted to win Japanese backing so as to strengthen his position as head of the Beijing government in the uncertain period that followed Yuan Shikai's death. In secret talks, Duan agreed that, in return for Japanese loans and military aid, his government would fully recognise Japan's special privileges in China. This was extended into a formal Sino-Japanese military alliance early in 1918, a one-sided agreement that simply formalised Japan's superiority over China in the way that previous 'unequal treaties' had.

After entering the European war, China played no direct role in the fighting, but its contribution to the Allied effort was a substantial one. Over 150,000 Chinese volunteers went to the Western Front where, in addition to working in munitions production, they dug graves and maintained 90 miles of Anglo-French trenches. The Chinese believed that such endeavour would be rewarded by favourable attention being given to their claims in the post-war settlement. However, the Allies saw the Chinese as mere 'coolies', who, when the war ended in November 1918, were made to stay in Europe as labourers clearing up war damage.

KEY TERM

Versailles Conference
The meeting of the victor nations at Versailles in France in 1919 to draw up the peace treaty and reshape the map of Europe.

The disdain of the Allies became even more evident at the **Versailles Conference**. Late in April 1919, the victorious Allies, gathered at Versailles in France, dismissively informed the Chinese that Germany's concessionary rights in Shandong province were not to be returned to China but were to be transferred instead to Japan. This was a direct reneging on the promise made to Duan Qirui by the Allies in the previous year, the commitment which had finally persuaded China to enter the First World War on their side in 1917. The Chinese delegation refused to accept the settlement but were powerless to prevent its

becoming part of the Versailles treaty. Their protests were simply ignored. The Chinese had gone to Versailles hoping to achieve three main results:

- the return of Shandong to China
- the withdrawal of the foreign concessions in China
- the cancellation of Japan's 21 Demands of 1915.

4 May reaction to the Versailles settlement

In the event, the Chinese had gained none of their aims. When the news of the Versailles betrayal reached China there was an explosion of anger. How intense the Chinese sense of nationalism could be when outraged had been shown in 1915 in the disturbances that had followed Yuan Shikai's acceptance of Japan's 21 Demands. China's major cities now experienced the same reaction. Chinese protesters took to the streets to vent their anger against the Allies, the Japanese, and also against the Chinese republic that had been unable to prevent the humiliation at Versailles. Government ministers were physically attacked, and anti-Japanese boycotts were organised in Beijing and Shanghai. Within a month the protests had spread to twenty provinces and demonstrations and strikes occurred in over 100 towns and cities. The Chinese government delayed its formal ending of the war with Germany until September 1919 and it was another four years before China signed a separate peace treaty with Germany. But this gesture of independence failed to mollify the protesters.

The passion and purpose of the demonstrators were typified in a Shanghai incident in which one of the student protesters ran out of red paint while writing the slogan 'Give us back Qingdao' in large characters on a white sheet. He bit into his arm at the elbow and tore the flesh away down to his wrist. He then wiped his brush along his bleeding arm so that he could finish the banner with his own blood. Onlookers applauded.

Significance of 4 May 1919

The most important aspect of the reaction was the response of Chinese students and intellectuals. The radical thinkers in the universities turned even more eagerly to revolutionary theory to justify their resistance. What the 4 May Movement did in the 1920s was to give a sense of direction to radicals and revolutionaries who regarded the ejection of the foreigner as a necessary stage in China's regeneration. Mao Zedong later observed that the 4 May Movement marked 'a new stage in China's revolution against imperialism and feudalism. A powerful camp made its appearance consisting of the working class, the student masses and the new national bourgeoisie.' Anti-Western and anti-Japanese demonstrations continued to occur throughout the early 1920s. The authorities managed to contain the unrest but they could not control the growing doubts about the ability of the republican government to represent China's true interests. It was such doubts that provided fertile opportunities for radicals to spread their propaganda.

SOURCE E



A gathering of 4 May protesters in front of the Tiananmen Gate in Beijing, 1919. Their banners bear such slogans as 'Reject the Versailles Treaty', 'Down with China's Internal Traitors', 'Destroy the 21 Demands', 'No Trade with Japan'.

? In what way do the slogans described in Source E illustrate the feelings of the demonstrators?

KEY FIGURES

Chen Duxiu (1879–1942) and Li Dazhao (1889–1927)

Both played major roles in providing the intellectual justification for the 4 May Movement.

The cult of science

The impact of the 4 May Movement was not confined to politics. Historians frequently allude to the first quarter of the twentieth century in China as a time of 'intellectual revolution', a reference to the quickening of interest in those Western ideas that offered a solution to China's besetting problems. The University of Beijing became the centre of this movement. Professors **Chen Duxiu** (Chen Tu-hsiu) and **Li Dazhao** (Li Ta-chao) encouraged their students to challenge the Confucian-dominated ideas of traditional Chinese scholarship. Nor was this simply an intellectual matter. Indeed, pure theory was seldom attractive to radical Chinese scholars. They were looking for practical answers to real problems. That is why they were attracted by Western science, whose experimental method and applied research had produced the Industrial Revolution which had made Western nations so powerful, as China had witnessed to its cost since the 1840s. Progressives spoke of 'Science and Democracy' as the essential requirements in China's modernisation. Indeed, Chen made a personification of 'Mr Science' and 'Mr Democracy', as a way of indicating their importance and making them understandable to ordinary Chinese.

Scientists from Europe and the USA were invited to China, where they lectured to packed audience in the universities and advised on scientific projects. Moves were made to modernise China's antiquated forms of written language and to introduce or expand into the Chinese curricula subjects such as economics and sociology whose **empirical methods** might be regarded as having scientific value. Acknowledging that Chinese manufacturing could not be effectively developed unless modern production methods were adopted, progressive thinkers urged the study of successful, applied Western technology.

KEY TERMS

Empirical methods Forms of research based on direct observation and measurement.

Expatriate Chinese living abroad, most numerously in Singapore, Malaya and Indonesia.

6 The Nationalists (GMD) under Sun Yatsen 1912–25

▶ *In what ways did Sun Yatsen shape the GMD in this period?*

The intense patriotism that the 4 May Movement stimulated proved of major benefit to Sun Yatsen. Disappointed by his failure to exploit the 1911–12 Revolution successfully (see page 54), Sun had resolved to reform and reinvigorate the GMD.

Sun Yatsen and Japan

Debarred from China for much of the period 1912–20, Sun spent a large part of the time in Japan reorganising his party with Japanese support. It is interesting to note that not all Japanese were happy with their country's domination of China. A small but significant minority believed that the genuine liberation of Asia from foreign control required that Japan and China should act together in a common anti-Western policy. Sun felt at home among such Japanese thinkers, but they were never numerous enough to influence Japan's policy at national level. The prevailing view in Tokyo was that the chronic weakness of China called for a policy of exploitation, not cooperation. Nevertheless, Japan continued to be a haven for exiled Chinese revolutionaries and it was there that Sun had the time to develop further his revolutionary ideas and plans.

The Guangzhou government

Sun returned to China in 1917 and set up a rival government in Guangzhou (Canton) to challenge the republican regime in Beijing. Initially, he had only limited success in Guangzhou and moved to Shanghai where, in the wake of the 4 May Movement, he rallied sufficient support be able to declare in 1919 that the Guomindang had been reformed. One of Sun's major achievements was in persuading many **expatriate** Chinese to contribute funds to his newly formed party. A year later, Sun returned with renewed hope to Guangzhou in his home province of Guangdong. This time his confidence was justified. Many of his former revolutionary colleagues, who had been lukewarm towards him

since his defeat by Yuan Shikai in 1912, now pledged their support. Guangzhou thus became in 1920 the major southern base of the GMD. It was there, during the last five years of his life, that Sun developed the ideas and organisation that enabled the GMD to become the dominant force in Chinese politics for the next quarter of a century.

Three People's Principles

It was in a speech at Guangzhou in 1923 that Sun Yatsen formally defined the ideology that he had developed during his years as a revolutionary. He defined this in terms of the 'Three People's Principles', which, he claimed, were inspired by US President Abraham Lincoln's **Gettysburg address**. Sun described his three principles as 'national sovereignty, democracy, people's welfare' and explained what he meant by these (Source F):

SOURCE F

From Sun Yatsen's speech at Guangzhou, 1923 (available at: www.milestonedocuments.com/documents/view/sun-yat-sensthe-three-principles-of-the-people/text).

National Sovereignty: *Today our urgent task is to restore our lost nationalism and to use the force of our 400 million people to avenge the wrongs of the world. Only when imperialism is eliminated can there be peace for mankind. To achieve this goal, we should first rejuvenate Chinese nationalism and restore China's position as a* ***sovereign state****.*

Democracy: *There is a difference between the European and Chinese concept of freedom. While the Europeans struggle for personal freedom, we struggle for national freedom. As far as we are concerned, personal freedom should never be too excessive. In fact, in order to win national freedom, we should not hesitate to sacrifice our personal freedom.*

People's Welfare: *What is the basic fact about China? It is the grinding poverty of the Chinese people.*

Solving the problem of people's livelihood does not stop with the limitation of the size of private capital. More important is the development of national capital, namely the development of government-owned enterprises. We should first have the political power to protect our native industry so that it will not be encroached upon by foreign powers.

? In Source F, what is the significance of the assertion that there is a difference between the European and Chinese concept of freedom?

KEY TERMS

Gettysburg address
A speech delivered by US President Lincoln in 1863 during the American Civil War (1861–5), in which he defined the purpose of the struggle to be the establishment of 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'.

Sovereign state
An independent, self-governing nation.

People's Welfare
Sometimes loosely translated as 'socialism'.

Sun Yatsen's formal stating of the Three People's Principles in 1923 was a key moment in the growth of the Guomindang (GMD). He had provided his party with positive objectives and helped to shape its ideas into a definite programme. The principles called on revolutionaries to think beyond mere protest and consider practical ways in which they could tackle their nation's needs. The emphasis was on the improvement of the conditions not of individuals but of the people as a whole. Ending foreign dominance and reasserting China's

independence were not ends in themselves; they were to be the prelude to the raising of the Chinese people from the poverty and backwardness that they currently suffered. The Three People's Principles gave moral purpose to revolution.

The importance of the GMD as a military force

Sun Yatsen was aware that, no matter how idealistic and well intentioned his newly formed GMD might be, it could achieve nothing unless it was militarily strong. Such was the lawlessness of warlord China that a party needed an army if it was to overcome its enemies. That was why, as well as developing his party's political ideas and building its finances, Sun devoted his attention to the construction of a military base at Guangzhou. The outcome was the founding in 1924 of Whampoa Academy, a centre dedicated to the training of GMD army recruits. This proved of major significance since from that point on the GMD became essentially a military organisation. All the party's leading figures, most notably Sun's successor, Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kaishek), were products of the Academy, branches of which were later established in other Nationalist strongholds, such as Nanjing and Chengdu.

Sun's plans for China's reunification

Although an ailing man by 1924, Sun Yatsen spent the last year of his life in an energetic attempt to lay the basis for China's reunification. On several occasions he travelled north to Beijing and also to Japan for talks with northern regional leaders. All this was part of his preparations for a showdown with the warlords. He believed that until the warlords were broken by force and made to acknowledge some form of superior central authority, China had no realistic prospect of becoming a united nation. One of the most remarkable features of Sun's policies in his later years was his cooperation with the **Comintern** and with China's own Communist Party.

KEY TERM

Comintern The Communist International, the body set up in Moscow in 1919 to organise international revolution by requiring foreign Communists to follow the Russian path.

7 The Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

▶ *Why had a Chinese Communist Party come into being by 1921?*

The common feature of all Chinese revolutionaries was their rejection of the obsolete political system that had failed China and had allowed foreigners to impose themselves on the nation. What they were seeking was a programme that would offer a solution to China's ills. The revolutionary movements at this time, whether of the right or of the left, were essentially nationalistic. They were all driven by a desire for Chinese regeneration.

KEY TERMS

Bolsheviks The Russian Communist Party.

October Revolution The seizure of power in Russia by the Bolsheviks in the name of the workers in October 1917.

Foreign interventionists A large number of countries, including Britain, France and Japan, sent forces to Russia to fight against the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War of 1918–20.

Marxism–Leninism The body of Marxist ideas as interpreted and applied by Lenin.

Imperialist phase of capitalism In Marxist theory, the stage of history when the capitalist nations progressed from exploiting their own domestic markets to seizing and exploiting overseas territories.

Dialectical process The successive series of class conflicts which, Marxists believed, would culminate in the victory of the working class over capitalism.

KEY FIGURES

V. I. Lenin (1870–1924)

The outstanding revolutionary who led his Bolshevik Party to power in Russia in the October Revolution.

Karl Marx (1818–83)

The German revolutionary who explained history in terms of the dialectic, a constant struggle between the exploiting and exploited classes, the haves and the have-nots.

The influence of the Russian Revolution of 1917

There was a striking similarity in the position of Russia and China in the early twentieth century. Both countries had recently been defeated by Japan, both were trying to come to terms with the need for economic and political modernisation, and both were poor relations when compared with the advanced, wealth-producing nations of Western Europe and the USA. There was, therefore, much about Russia that appealed to Chinese revolutionaries and reformers.

This attraction was intensified when the Chinese learned of the **Bolshevik** success in the **October Revolution**. Chinese intellectuals wrote admiringly of the achievements of **Lenin** and the Bolsheviks in taking power and establishing a workers' state. Admiration increased when the Chinese learned of the Bolsheviks' defeat of the **foreign interventionists** in Russia in the period 1918–20. Here was a living example of the overthrow of Western imperialism, made more impressive by the fact that the nations which the Bolsheviks had repelled were the very same as those currently occupying China.

The revolutionary ideas of **Karl Marx** had been known in China since the beginning of the century, but what gave them special appeal was the apparent failure of the 1911 Revolution, and of the republic that followed, to advance China's cause. Disillusioned Chinese radicals turned impatiently away from what they regarded as the failure of democracy in China. They were drawn instead to another Western philosophy, but this time one that had been rejected by the West. The fear with which the imperialist nations regarded Marxism gave it an added attraction for Chinese Nationalists.

To the young intellectuals who became drawn to Marxist ideas, the great inspiration, therefore, was the successful October Revolution in Russia in 1917. They could now observe Marxism in action in anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist Russia. The rejection of Western values, implicit in the Bolshevik Revolution, appealed greatly to Chinese revolutionaries, for whom the main attraction of **Marxism–Leninism** was its explanation of the **imperialist phase of capitalism**, the process which had led to China's current humiliation at Western hands. When one of the first actions of the new Soviet state proved to be the renunciation of Russia's traditional claim to Chinese territories, the respect of revolutionaries in China for the Bolsheviks rose to new heights.

Russian Bolsheviks come to China

Judging that the unstable situation in China made it ready for revolution, the Comintern sent agents there. Lenin's interpretation of imperialism became especially relevant at this point. The Bolshevik leader's main argument was that Western colonialism marked a definite predetermined phase in the **dialectical process**. As capitalism began to strangle itself through overproduction and competition for declining home markets, it sought to survive by exploiting overseas territories, either as dumping grounds for surplus produce or as

sources of cheap raw material and labour. Imperialism was thus an expression of capitalism in crisis. It followed that the historical role of the exploited colonial peoples was to rise up against their oppressors so as to achieve not only their own liberation but also the collapse of international capitalism.

In 1918, **Joseph Stalin**, the Bolshevik commissar for nationalities, gave exact expression to the Soviet concept of imperialism as it applied to China: 'The imperialists want not only the East's natural resources but also its "obedient" people to form an army to crush their own revolutionary workers at home. This is the reason they call their Eastern colonies and semi-colonies "inexhaustible" manpower reserves.'

KEY FIGURE

Joseph Stalin (1878–1953)

Lenin's successor as leader of the Soviet Union, which he dominated from 1924 until his death nearly 30 years later.

The Marxist–Leninist theory of imperialism offered the Chinese both an explanation of why they had been humiliated by the West and a means of restoring their former greatness. In October 1920, Lenin declared to a Chinese delegation visiting Moscow, 'The Chinese revolution will finally cause the downfall of world imperialism.' Two Comintern agents were closely involved in the formal setting up of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in July 1920. Twenty representatives from various provinces gathered in Shanghai to adopt a basic revolutionary programme and elect an executive committee, with Chen Duxiu becoming the secretary general. A year later, in 1921, Chen's protégé, Mao Zedong, representing Hunan province, joined the party. It should be added that, although July 1921 is officially regarded as the date of the founding of the CCP, the evidence is that the party had been formed a year earlier. But, out of reverence for Mao, who was not at the 1920 meeting, the formal date in official CCP histories is always given as 1921. By 1925, the number of registered members had risen to over 2000, with many thousands more who could be counted as active sympathisers.

Chapter summary

Following its failure in the Boxer Uprising, the Qing government tried to recover its position by introducing further reforms. But it was too late. Revolutionary movements within China, principally Sun Yatsen's Alliance League, had begun to direct the unrest of the workers and the dissatisfaction of the intellectuals and Nationalists against the imperial system. The death in 1908 of Cixi rendered the government effectively leaderless. Mutinies, which the Qing armies could not control, led in 1912 to the meek abdication of the centuries-old dynasty. However, the collapse of the Qing and the creation of a republic brought increased conflict to China. Sun Yatsen's southern Nationalists had hoped to take power but were outmanoeuvred by the self-aggrandising Yuan Shikai, who held office as president from 1912 to 1916. Yet Yuan solved none of China's basic problems and his death in 1916 ushered in the chaotic period of the warlords. Internal disruption and humiliation at the hands of the foreign powers stimulated an intense nationalism, which culminated in 1919 in a series of demonstrations that marked the beginning of the '4 May Movement'. It was also in 1919 that a group of revolutionaries, inspired by the Russian Revolution, embraced Marxism, and two years later they founded the Chinese Communist Party.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. Why did unrest grow among Chinese workers in the early twentieth century?
2. How significant was the death of Cixi in 1908?
3. Why did the Qing dynasty collapse in 1912?
4. By what steps did Yuan Shikai become president in 1912?
5. What were the chief characteristics of warlord rule?
6. What was the political effect in China of warlord rule?
7. How big a threat to Chinese independence were Japan's '21 Demands'?
8. What impact did the First World War have on China's international status?
9. To what pressures was the 4 May Movement a response?
10. What place did science have in Chinese revolutionary thinking?
11. What values did Sun Yatsen's Three People's Principles encompass?
12. Why, in his reorganisation of the GMD, did Sun put such emphasis on the military?
13. Why were Chinese progressives so impressed by the Russian Revolution?
14. What developments led to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921?

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTION

1. To what extent was the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911–12 responsible for the collapse of government authority in the years 1912–25?

SOURCE ANALYSIS QUESTION

1. Assess the value of Source B (page 52) for revealing the economic problems confronting China in the last decades of the Qing empire and Sun Yatsen's proposals for remedying them. Explain your answer, using the source, the information given about its origin and your own knowledge about the historical context.

CHAPTER 4

Nationalists and Communists 1924–45

Emerging in the period of the 4 May Movement, China's two revolutionary parties, the Guomindang (GMD) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), came together in the mid-1920s in a successful campaign against warlordism. With the warlords broken, the GMD under Jiang Jieshi then turned on its former allies and attempted to destroy them. Surviving by a desperate flight during which Mao Zedong established himself as their leader, the Communists reached a northern safe haven in Yanan, which they proceeded to develop as a Chinese soviet. Although Jiang's Nationalists were never in full command of China, they claimed to be the legitimate government and, therefore, entitled to shape the nation according to their principles. These developments are covered in this chapter under the following headings:

- ★ The GMD–CCP United Front 1924–7
- ★ The Communists under Mao Zedong
- ★ The Guomindang under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kaishek)

Key dates

1923	Friendship pact between Moscow and the GMD	**1926–8**	Northern Expedition
1924	USSR's seizure of Outer Mongolia	**1927**	Jiang's White Terror
1924–8	GMD–CCP United Front		Autumn Harvest Rising
1925	Death of Sun Yatsen; Jiang Jieshi became GMD leader	**1927–34**	Jiangxi soviet
		1934–5	Long March
		1935–45	Yanan soviet
	30 May Incident	**1942–5**	Rectification of conduct campaign

1 The GMD–CCP United Front 1924–7

▶ *What factors led to the formation of the United Front in 1924?*

Although a tiny party numerically, containing only 50 members in 1921, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had some success during the next two years in organising strikes and boycotts in Shanghai and Hong Kong. However, its attempt in 1923 to organise a railway stoppage in the Beijing region, an area

under the control of the warlord Zhang Zuolin (see page 62), was a calamitous failure. It was the CCP's ineffectiveness in the face of warlord power that convinced the Comintern that the Chinese Communists were incapable of being a genuinely revolutionary force on their own. The way forward, it argued, was for the CCP to ally itself with the other major revolutionary party in China, the Guomindang (GMD). The Comintern urged the young Communist Party to cooperate with Sun Yatsen, whose brand of socialism it interpreted as wholly compatible with Marxism. In 1923, the Comintern agents Adolf Joffe and Michael Borodin made direct contact with the GMD, offering to assist with money and military supplies.

Sun Yatsen and the Comintern

For his part, Sun Yatsen was very willing to respond to Moscow's overtures. He genuinely admired the structure and discipline of the Russian Bolshevik Party and saw common ground between their revolutionary programme and his own Three People's Principles. He accepted the requests of the Comintern that the members of the young CCP be allowed to join the GMD. Sun hoped that such cooperation would encourage Moscow to continue supplying the GMD with money and ammunition. The outcome was a pact of friendship between Moscow and the GMD in 1923. This prompted the Comintern advisers in China to renew their call to the CCP to throw in their lot with the Nationalists in advancing a broad-front revolutionary force in China.

The Soviet Union's attitude towards China

The willingness of the Soviet Union to support the Nationalists and its demand that the Chinese Communists form an alliance with them are explained by its broader international concerns. Anxious to safeguard its Far Eastern frontiers, the Soviet Union considered that cooperation with the GMD was more likely to secure Russian interests in Mongolia and thus preserve it as a buffer against the growing strength of Japan. It was such thinking that lay behind the Soviet Union's seizure of Outer Mongolia in 1924 from China and its insistence that the Beijing government recognise its right to retain hold of the Chinese Eastern Railway, which provided the **trans-Siberian railway** with a short cut to its Pacific terminus. These moves were clear evidence that, when it came to a question of its own national concerns, Soviet Russia was less than wholly committed to the proletarian principle it had proclaimed in 1918 of abandoning all claims to foreign territory.

The Comintern's belief that the revolutionary future lay with the Nationalists was shown by the efforts it put into reorganising the GMD along Soviet lines. In 1924, Borodin played a major role in drafting a new GMD constitution, which, out of deference to Sun Yatsen, was nominally based on the Three People's Principles, but which was clearly Leninist in character. In keeping with Lenin's concept of **democratic centralism**, power was concentrated in the hands of the leaders and great emphasis was placed on the need for an effective GMD army.

KEY TERMS

Trans-Siberian railway
Stretching from Moscow to Vladivostok, it connected Russia's European and Asian territories.

Democratic centralism
The principle that in a truly revolutionary party the members owed absolute loyalty and obedience to the leaders.

Pointing to the success of the **Red Army** in Russia, the Comintern argued that, without a similar military organisation, the Chinese revolutionaries would be incapable of overcoming either the warlords or the imperialist occupiers.

Chinese Communist arguments for alliance with the Nationalists

Initially, a majority of the Chinese Communists believed that a common front between themselves and the Nationalists was the best means of both destroying the warlords and expelling the foreigners, aims which were fundamental to all revolutionaries. It is important to stress that the CCP and GMD were both revolutionary parties. The Nationalists under Jiang Kaishek would later come to be regarded as **reactionaries**, but it is noteworthy how progressive many of them originally were. That is certainly how they were seen by Moscow, which eased the CCP's path to cooperation with the GMD by acknowledging that the priority for revolution in China was national unity against the warlords and imperialists. This view was formally adopted as party policy by the CCP at both its second and third congresses in 1922 and 1923 when it voted for union with the GMD: 'the Chinese Communist Party should co-operate with the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist should join the Guomindang as individuals'.

Communist doubts

Yet, even at this early stage, there were those in the CCP who were uneasy at the thought of a union along the lines advocated by the Comintern. Chen Duxiu was worried that the Russian advice derived from an incomplete understanding of the situation in China. He was also disturbed that so many of the GMD's members came from the bourgeoisie (businessmen and bankers) of China's east-coast cities. One calculation was that 90 per cent of the GMD's funding came from one city alone – Shanghai.

The Comintern agents made light of Chen's anxieties, assuring him that the Guomindang was dominated not by the bourgeoisie but by the **Left GMD**. The Comintern repeated its instruction that the CCP join the Nationalists. Overawed by the reputation of the Russian Bolsheviks as the leaders of world revolution, most CCP members swallowed their misgivings and did as they were told. The outcome was the formation in 1924 of the GMD–CCP United Front.

30 May Incident, 1925

The argument for the existence of the United Front was bolstered by an event in 1925, which may be regarded as marking the climax of what had begun in 1919 with the 4 May Movement (see page 63). In Shanghai, on 30 May 1925, a large crowd marched in protest against an earlier shooting of Chinese workers by Japanese factory guards. Frightened by the scale of the march, the British commander of the international settlement in the city ordered his forces to scatter the protesters with rifle fire, an overreaction that resulted in twelve deaths. The revolutionary parties immediately exploited the outrage among the

KEY TERMS

Red Army The military force developed by the Bolsheviks which had enabled them to win the Russian Civil War (1918–20).

Reactionaries Those opposed to progressive or revolutionary change.

Left GMD The pro-Moscow Marxist sympathisers within the Guomindang.

Chinese to organise further strikes and riots. Attacks were made on foreign legations amid scenes reminiscent of the Boxer Uprising (see page 34). For days, Guangzhou and Shanghai became impossible to govern. An uneasy peace was eventually restored but the incident had revealed how intense anti-foreigner sentiments had become.

For Chinese revolutionaries, the 30 May affair added weight to their conviction that China's internal and external enemies could be overcome only by force. The chief beneficiary from this stress on the role of the military was Jiang Jieshi, who shortly before the 30 May Incident had become the leader of the Nationalists. In 1924, he had been appointed commander-in-chief at the Whampoa Military Academy at Guangzhou, the GMD's military headquarters. Jiang then used his leadership of the **National Revolutionary Army (NRA)**, which that position gave him, to overcome his rivals within the GMD in the succession struggle that followed the death of Sun Yatsen in March 1925.

KEY TERM

National Revolutionary Army (NRA) The GMD's military wing.

The effect of Sun Yatsen's death

The death of Sun Yatsen in 1925 was a highly significant moment in Chinese politics. It had the effect of releasing the anti-Communist forces within the GMD which Sun had previously held in check. Jiang Jieshi's success in the GMD power struggle was a victory for the military in the party, the element that had close relations with the Chinese middle class and which was opposed to the social revolutionary policies of the CCP. Jiang had not shared his predecessor's belief that the CCP could be easily absorbed into the GMD and then rendered harmless. Although Jiang, along with nearly all the leading members of the GMD, had received training in Moscow in the early 1920s, he had acquired no love for Marxism. His conviction was that the Communists represented an internal challenge that had to be crushed.

However, Jiang knew that the Communists were not the only obstacle. Before he and his Nationalists could take full power in China, the warlords, who still controlled large areas of central and northern China, had to be broken. The time was ripe; the 30 May Incident in 1925 had created a mood of national anger that could now be turned against warlordism. Jiang planned to combine his two objectives, the destruction of the warlords and the annihilation of the Communists, into one major campaign. He could not, of course, openly declare his second objective until the first had been achieved. As long as the warlords were undefeated, the GMD–CCP Front had to be preserved; he still needed the CCP and the Comintern as military allies.

Despite Jiang's hostility to communism and the Soviet Union, the Comintern continued to urge the Chinese Communists to work with the GMD in the United Front. The result was the joint planning of a Nationalist–Communist campaign aimed at the annihilation of warlord power. In July 1926, in his southern base in Guangzhou, Jiang Jieshi made a passionate speech calling upon

all true revolutionaries to join his Nationalists in a national crusade to destroy the warlords. His speech marked the beginning of the 'Northern Expedition'.

The Northern Expedition 1926–8

In campaigning against the warlords, the United Front's strategy was to surround the individual warlord armies, cut their supply lines and steadily crush them. This often resulted in brutal warfare with heavy casualties. Nevertheless, by the summer of 1927, United Front forces had captured the key cities of Wuhan and Shanghai. A year later with the defeat of Zhang Zuolin, the warlord of the Beijing area, the Front had achieved its major objective. Not all the warlords had been overcome, but central China had been freed from warlord control. The GMD was in a position to announce that it was now the legitimate government of China and that it would rule from the new capital of Nanjing.

The CCP's contribution

One consistent advantage to the Nationalists during the Northern Expedition was the hatred most of the people living under the warlords felt towards their oppressors. This made the local population willing to pass on information to the United Front forces and on occasion join them in the struggle. A good example of this was the work of Mao Zedong as a United Front organiser in Hunan. His links with the **peasant associations** in the province proved invaluable in enabling the United Front's units to drive through Guanxi and Hunan and outflank the warlord armies. In 1926, Mao's endeavours earned him the official accolade 'son of Hunan'.

KEY TERM

Peasant associations
Self-protection organisations formed by local communities in the rural areas.

There was little doubt that the Communists had made a vital contribution to the victories of the GMD–CCP alliance. As well as contributing troops, the Communists had caused great trouble for the warlord forces through acts of sabotage and by organising disruptive strikes and boycotts. Mao himself attributed the United Front's successes to the cooperation between the Nationalist and Communist forces: 'there was unity between officers and men and between the army and the people, and the army was filled with a revolutionary militancy'.

Mao's enthusiasm is a reminder of how easily the Chinese Communists had let themselves be fooled by Jiang Jieshi at this juncture. Jiang had launched the Northern Expedition with two aims: the declared one of breaking the warlords, the undeclared one of destroying his allies in the United Front, the Communists. Confident by 1927 that the warlords were effectively beaten and that he no longer needed Communist support, Jiang began openly to implement the second of his aims. He had already begun to purge his party of Communist sympathisers. During 1926 he had dismissed a number of CCP officials from their posts in the GMD, arrested several Comintern advisers, and removed his closest challenger, **Wang Jingwei** (Wang Ching-wei), from office.

KEY FIGURE

Wang Jingwei (1883–1944)
Leader of the Left GMD, who later became leader of a Japanese puppet regime in Nanjing in 1940.

Despite the growing evidence of Jiang's active antagonism towards them, the Chinese Communists were slow to react. This was largely because the majority of them were still in thrall to the Comintern, whose continuing line was that the United Front must be maintained at whatever cost. It remained Stalin's belief that the GMD was a truly revolutionary force in China and that the Chinese Communists were incapable on their own of achieving revolution. As Stalin saw it, the most fitting role the CCP could play at this stage of history was that of martyrs for the cause of international communism. He had no qualms about obliging the CCP to follow a policy that was soon to bring it to the verge of destruction.

The results of the Northern Expedition

In July 1928, Jiang Jieshi officially declared that, since it had achieved its main purpose of defeating the warlords and reuniting China, the Northern Expedition could now be regarded as completed. Equally important for him was that the expedition had given him the means and opportunity to embark on a programme for the destruction of those he regarded as his chief enemy, the Communists. However, subsequent events were to undermine his claim of victory over the warlords. The defeat of warlordsim was only partial:

- Not all the warlords had been crushed.
- A number of them agreed to accept the GMD's authority only on condition that they were allowed to keep their private armies.
- Others were won over by being offered positions in the GMD party or government.

The warlords remained a significant factor in Chinese politics. It is arguable, therefore, that the Nationalists did not so much conquer the warlords as come to terms with them. This was the constant assertion later made by the CCP in its propaganda against the Nationalists. Indeed, it was often said by the opponents of Jiang Jieshi that he was no more than a warlord himself and that the only difference between him and the others was that he was more successful. The charge was that Jiang had used his military base in Guangzhou to make a grab for power by launching a challenge against the legitimate republican government in Beijing. The relative weakness of Jiang's position had two main results:

- It prevented him from ever fully controlling China.
- It intensified his determination to destroy the Communists, whom he regarded as the main obstacle to his exercising complete power.

KEY TERM

White Terror The GMD's massacre of the Communists. White was a common term for Jiang's Nationalists, in contrast to Red for the Communists.

The White Terror ('the Shanghai massacre') 1927

As soon as Jiang judged that the Northern Expedition would be ultimately successful against the warlords, he intensified his attack on the Communists. This reached its climax in the '**White Terror**' in Shanghai in April 1927. Shanghai had witnessed the growth of a powerful trade union movement under

SOURCE A



The beheading of captured Communists in Shanghai in 1927; such scenes were common during the White Terror.

Why was Jiang prepared to go to the extreme lengths shown in Source A to crush the CCP?

the direction of **Zhou Enlai**, and the formation of a workers' army that was so effective that it had been able to undermine the local warlord's attempt to prevent the advance of Jiang's Nationalist forces.

Only days after entering the city, Jiang turned savagely on the very people who had earlier given him a hero's welcome. Backed by Shanghai's industrialists and merchants, who were eager to crush the trade unions, and by those living in the international settlements, who were fearful of the growing tide of anti-foreigner demonstrations, Jiang's troops engaged in an orgy of killing. Using the information passed to them by the city's **triads** and underworld gangsters, they dragged out 5000 known Communists and their sympathisers and executed them by shooting or beheading. Similar anti-Communist coups were carried out by Jiang's GMD armies in a number of other cities, including Guangzhou. In Changsha, the capital of Mao Zedong's home province of Hunan, over 3000 suspected Communists were butchered in one day.

Autumn Harvest Rising 1927

There were belated attempts at CCP resistance, the most notable being the **Autumn Harvest Rising** led by Mao Zedong in Hunan in September 1927. The rising was intended as more than just a military action. It was a late but determined assertion of the CCP's independence and therefore a deliberate defiance of Moscow's order that, despite the White Terror, the United Front must be maintained. Mao signed a statement issued by the CCP leaders which condemned Jiang Jieshi for his betrayal of Sun Yatsen's memory and for

KEY FIGURE

Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)
One of the ablest members of the CCP, he helped Mao's rise to power and later became Communist China's outstanding foreign statesman.

KEY TERMS

Triads Secret societies, usually criminal, involved in drugs, gambling and prostitution rackets.

Autumn Harvest Rising Mao Zedong's unsuccessful 1927 campaign against the GMD in Hunan province, a failure that convinced Mao of the need to resort to guerrilla tactics and avoid pitched battles.

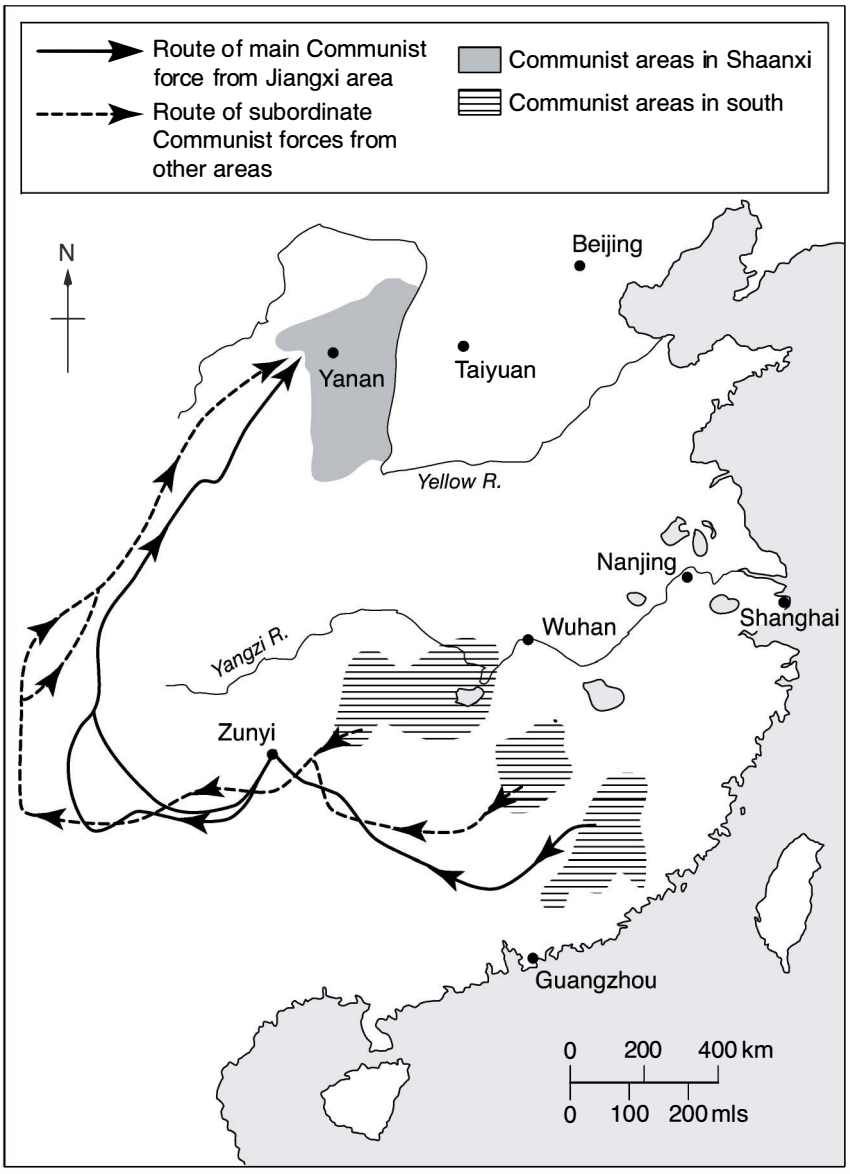


Figure 4.1 Map showing the route of the Long March.

destroying the revolutionary alliance. Jiang was the 'scum of his party and the swindler of the people'.

Along with the Autumn Harvest Rising, all the other CCP campaigns undertaken against the Nationalists in late 1927 ended in failure, largely because the Communist forces were outnumbered. By the end of that year it seemed that the White Terror had achieved its objective: the CCP was in a desperate plight and appeared to be on the point of being totally overwhelmed. That the Communists survived at all was because a contingent of them rejected the Comintern's orders and fled to the mountains of Jiangxi (Kiangsi) province. Mao was one of those who led the breakaway. For the next seven years, the remnants of the CCP were to be engaged in a struggle in Jiangxi to survive against continual Nationalist harassment.

2 The Communists under Mao Zedong

How did Mao's political ideas condition the way he led the CCP before 1945?

Mao's concept of leadership

Mao Zedong, a peasant from Hunan province, had grown up an intensely patriotic young man, angered by China's failings and much impressed by Sun Yatsen's revolutionary ideas. Between 1912 and 1919, Mao had witnessed scenes of great violence as rival republican factions had fought for supremacy in his home province of Hunan. He recorded that the experience deeply affected him and led him to conclude that to be a leader and to gain success politically or militarily required total commitment and a willingness to use extreme methods. This helps to explain why throughout his career he was so ready to use the toughest means to crush political opponents. One of his most revealing sayings was that 'all power grows out of the barrel of a gun'.

All Mao Zedong's experiences as a young revolutionary convinced him that unless he was prepared to use brutal, unyielding methods he could achieve little. He was a dialectician, a believer that life was essentially a struggle between opposites in which the more powerful always win. He held that all change, all progress, resulted from suppression of the weaker by the stronger.

Mao's ruthlessness

Moving to Beijing in 1919, he became attracted to Marxist ideas and developed the conviction that if China was to regain its greatness it would have to undergo a profound social and political revolution. To further this aim, Mao in 1921 became one of the members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). When Jiang's 'White Terror' in 1927 forced the Communists to flee to Jiangxi province, Mao began his first endeavour to build a Chinese **soviet**. It was at Jiangxi that Mao revealed the ruthlessness that he regarded as essential to effective leadership and which characterised his whole career. In 1930, he ordered the torture and execution of some 4000 Red Army troops whom he accused of plotting against him. His written instruction read: 'Do not kill the important leaders too quickly, but squeeze out of them the maximum information.'

KEY TERM

Soviet A Communist-controlled area in which life, politically, socially and economically, is structured along communal, socialist lines.

The Long March 1934–5

By 1934, the Communists were on the point of extinction, having being penned in their Jiangxi base by surrounding GMD forces. However, the Communists survived by a desperate breakout and flight, known as the Long March. The march began as a rout in 1934 but because of its eventual success became a powerful legend, looked on as the great formative experience of Chinese

communism by which Mao established his leadership in heroically guiding his followers to salvation. In the new northern base of Yanan, reached in 1935, Mao began to rebuild a soviet in defiance of the GMD and of the Japanese who had begun to occupy parts of China in 1931 (see page 102).

Social factors in Mao's ideology

Once established in Yanan in 1935, Mao over the next decade turned the soviet into both a protective base and a haven to which Communist sympathisers flocked. It was at Yanan that Mao developed and formalised his revolutionary ideas. This involved him in an ideological battle to enforce his leadership in the face of opposition from within the CCP and from the Comintern. It is important to stress that it was because he was an ardent nationalist that Mao had adopted communism. He saw in Marxism–Leninism (see page 70) a set of principles that he could turn into a practical programme for restoring China to its original greatness. Mao was never a slave to Marxist theory: he interpreted the ideology to suit his purposes for China. The persistent theme in his actions and his writings was that Chinese considerations always had primacy. Since foreign Communists, no matter how eminent, could not truly understand actual Chinese conditions, it was not for them to dictate policy.

Mao was also concerned that to give too much consideration to the opinions of foreign Communists as expressed through the Comintern would damage his claim to personal authority in China. His conviction was that 'correct leadership should be based upon careful, detailed study of local conditions which can only be done by each of the Communist parties in its own country. The Comintern, far away from the actual struggle, can no longer provide proper leadership.'

The urban versus rural dispute

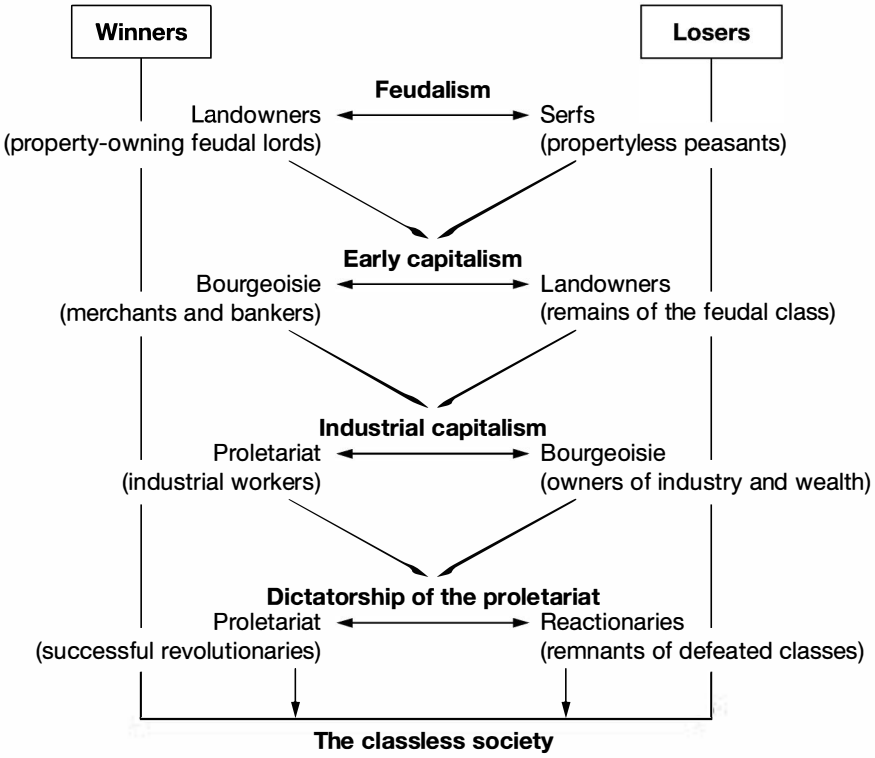
Mao's ideas brought him criticism from the pro-Moscow elements in the party, who accused him of ignoring Comintern instructions and taking an independent line. A particular point of contention was the Comintern's insistence that the CCP put all its efforts into fomenting risings in the urban areas, a policy that Mao rejected. His central belief was that China's revolution must be a peasant revolution. This was heresy in the eyes of the Comintern theorists. They asserted that:

- Mao was ignoring the laws of the dialectic whose stages followed a predetermined, ordered path and thus could not be bypassed.
- Peasant revolution was not an end in itself; it was merely the precursor of the final revolution of the **proletariat**.
- China lacked an urban proletariat and was, therefore, incapable of achieving a genuine revolution.
- The best that the CCP could accomplish would be to help bring about the **bourgeois stage of revolution** by merging with the Nationalists.

KEY TERMS

Proletariat The industrial working class, destined, in Marxist analysis, to be the final victor in the dialectical process.

Bourgeois stage of revolution The period of history when the middle class, having overcome the previous feudal system, dominates society until the working-class revolution occurs.



According to the diagram, what are the principal stages in class conflict?

Figure 4.2 Diagram illustrating the pattern of the dialectic.

Mao rejected these assertions and stressed that Marxist theory had to be interpreted in the light of the actual conditions in China. He accepted that China did not possess an urban proletariat but dismissed the notion that genuine revolution could be achieved only by the industrial workers. He advanced his own counter-argument to the Comintern's by stressing these convictions:

- The rural peasants made up 88 per cent of China's population of 500 million It followed that a popular revolution would have to be the work of the peasantry.
- It also followed that in China a peasant revolution would be sufficient to fulfil the demands of the dialectic.
- There was, therefore, no necessity to wait for the growth of an industrial proletariat in China. Genuine revolution would be achieved by the peasants: 'no power, however strong, can restrain them'. He told his followers that it was their task to unleash the huge potential of the peasantry: 'The peasants are the sea; we are the fish. We live in the sea.'

Mao also redefined the term proletariat to mean not so much a social class as an attitude. Those who were genuinely committed to revolution were by that very fact members of the proletariat. Anyone who had suffered oppression at the hands of class enemies could be counted a member of the proletariat.

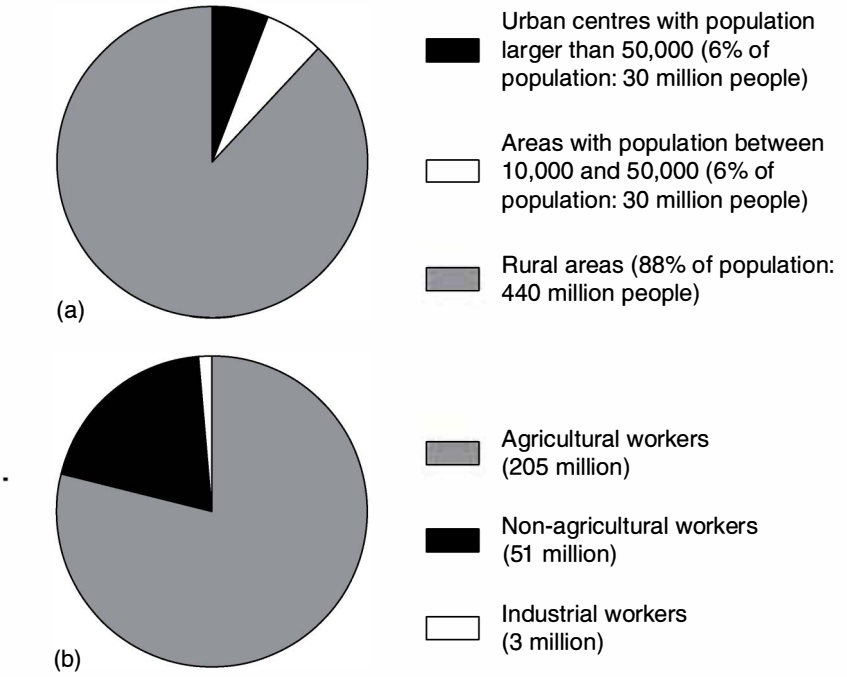


Figure 4.3 (a) Location of the population of China in 1933 (500 million people). (b) Labour sectors for a total workforce of 259 million in 1933.

KEY FIGURE

Li Lisan (1899–1967)
A Moscow-trained CCP member, who held the orthodox Marxist view that the peasants could not be a truly revolutionary force.

KEY TERM

'Twenty-eight Bolsheviks'
A particular set of CCP members who had been trained in Moscow and returned to China with instructions to make the party conform to Soviet concepts of urban revolution.

CCP opposition to Mao

Mao's particular interpretation of the dialectic put him at variance with the orthodox Communists, such as **Li Lisan**, a Moscow-trained Marxist, who continued to follow the Comintern line by insisting that the Chinese Communists concentrate their revolutionary activities in the urban areas. Throughout the 1930s, Mao was involved in a battle to assert his authority within the party. His major opponents were a faction known as the **'Twenty-eight Bolsheviks'**, who followed Li Lisan in criticising Mao for ignoring Comintern instructions and acting independently. Mao was accused of 'reckless adventurism' for assuming that the stages of proletarian revolution could be skipped at will. Mao survived such criticism thanks largely to four key factors:

- His successful leadership of the Long March had given him a moral superiority within the CCP.
- As a result of his own field research, Mao had an unrivalled knowledge of the Chinese peasantry, which meant he dominated any discussion of the party's peasant policy.
- His intense self-belief and determination allowed him to silence opponents and browbeat waverers into line.
- He was indispensable as a military planner.

Mao's ideological dominance

Mao defined the revolution he was leading not as a class movement but as a national one. Faced with the Japanese occupation of China after 1937 (see



Mao Zedong

1893	Born in Hunan province
1912	Joined anti-Qing army in Hunan
1919	Worked as a librarian at Beijing University
1921	Member of the CCP
1927–34	Created the Jiangxi soviet
1934–5	Led the Long March
1935–45	Created the Yanan soviet
1945–9	Led the CCP to victory in the Civil War
1949	Founded the People's Republic of China (PRC)
1949–76	Leader of PRC
1976	Died

Background

A natural dialectician who believed in violence, Mao developed the conviction that if China was to be regenerated it would have to undergo a profound social and political revolution. In 1921, he became a member of the CCP and over the next few years helped to organise the GMD–CCP United Front against the warlords. Then, to avoid being destroyed by Jiang Jieshi, Mao fled to Jiangxi where he established the first Chinese soviet. He frequently rejected the orders from Moscow which instructed the CCP to base its activities in the towns rather than the countryside.

Leading the CCP

In 1934, facing extermination by surrounding GMD forces, the Jiangxi Communists undertook the legendary Long March. It was during the year-long March that Mao began to assert his authority over the CCP, an authority that he then ruthlessly consolidated at Yanan, where the Communists established their main base between 1935 and 1945. While at Yanan, Mao developed his theories of revolution based on the peasantry as the major dynamic of revolutionary change in China. Communists gained a not-entirely deserved reputation for being foremost in resisting the Japanese who occupied China from 1931 to 1945.

Civil War victor

With the surrender of Japan at the end of the Second World War in 1945, the GMD–CCP Civil War that had lasted intermittently since 1927 was renewed. A four-year struggle ended with the complete victory of the Communists. Jiang's GMD were driven from the Chinese mainland to the offshore island of Taiwan. In October 1949, Mao triumphantly declared that a new Communist society had come into being: the People's Republic of China (PRC). Mao was destined to rule this new nation for the next quarter of a century, until his death in 1976.

page 102), Mao declared the aim of his party to be 'long-term co-operation with all those classes, strata, political groups and individuals who were willing to fight Japan to the end'. He appealed to all Chinese of goodwill to unite against the enemies of the nation.

Helped by Yanan's geographical distance from Soviet influence, Mao was able to dominate the urban-orientated members of the CCP and bring the party to accept his line of thinking. He was acting very much in the Chinese tradition of taking from a foreign ideology those elements considered to be of practical value for China. He made Marxism fit the Chinese situation, not the Chinese situation fit Marxism. For some years, he had to contend with opposition from within the party over his reshaping of revolutionary Marxism, but by outmanoeuvring and, where necessary, removing opponents he was able to establish an unmatched authority and so impose his ideas.

Mao's land policy

Mao gave practical form to his concept of revolution by sending out Red Army units from Yanan to occupy neighbouring regions. The method was for the troops, having occupied a particular area, to round up the landowners, who were then driven out or shot. The land was then declared to be '**liberated**' and was reallocated to the peasants who were invited to cooperate in reorganising the village or region into a soviet. The hope was that such treatment would persuade the local people to become CCP supporters.

KEY TERMS

Liberated The Communist term for the areas they brought under their military and political control.

Usury Charging exorbitant interest on money loans.

Mao urged the soldiers who did the liberating to regard themselves as ambassadors carrying the Communist message to the peasants. Until the Yanan period, Chinese armies by tradition had invariably terrorised local populations. The imperial and warlord forces had marauded and plundered. But the Red Army was instructed to behave differently. Its duty was to aid and comfort the people. Mao laid down a code of conduct for his troops, which included such instructions as:

SOURCE B

From Mao's instruction to the Red Army, 1937, quoted in Anne Freemantle, editor, *Mao Tse-tung*, Mentor Books, 1962, p. xii.

Be courteous and help out when you can.
Return all borrowed articles.
Replace all damaged articles.
Be honest in all transactions with the peasants.
Pay for all articles purchased.
Be sanitary and establish latrines at a distance from people's houses.
Don't take liberties with women.
Don't kill prisoners of war.

? How do the instructions in Source B relate to the idea of the Red Army soldiers as ambassadors?

These instructions were an effective piece of propaganda. They provided a simple guide which, when followed, endeared the Red Army to many in the rural population. To win further support from the peasants in the liberated areas, the Red Army introduced a number of schemes, including:

- the creation of local peasant associations, which were invited to work with the CCP in improving their own conditions
- a programme for ending **usury** that had so often blighted the lives of the peasants
- the introduction of literacy and education programmes
- the provision of basic medical services.

This evident sensitivity to the wants of the peasants was further evidence of successful CCP propaganda. The popularity of the CCP's land policies played its part in the growth of the party from 40,000 in 1937 to 1 million by 1945. It was from this expanding membership that the volunteers for the Red Army came.

However, it was not all harmony; there was a darker side to Communist land policy.

Repression on the land

Mao was certainly prepared for propaganda purposes to be moderate at times, but all the moves that the CCP made under him had the essential purpose of strengthening Communist control. The removal of the landlords in the areas where the Red Army held sway was often a brutal process. Moreover, despite its feeling for the peasants and its genuine popularity with many of them, the Yanan regime was fiercely authoritarian. In the liberated areas, villages that would not conform to the demands of the CCP's land programme were subject to harsh penalties such as having all their crops and livestock confiscated and ruinous taxes imposed on them.

What the CCP's occupation of the 'liberated areas' actually entailed was described by the Western writer who travelled with the Red Army. Writing in 1938, **Edgar Snow** observed:

SOURCE C

From Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, Random House, 1938, p. 243.

While theoretically the soviets were a 'workers and peasants' government, in actual practice the whole constituency was overwhelmingly peasant in character. Various committees were established under each of the district soviets. An all-powerful revolutionary committee, was elected in a mass meeting shortly after the occupation of a district by the Red Army. Under the district soviet, and appointed by it, were committees for education, co-operatives, military training, political training, land, public health, partisan training, revolutionary defence, enlargement of the Red Army, agrarian mutual aid, Red Army land tilling, and others.

The work of all these organizations and their various committees was co-ordinated by the Central Soviet Government, the Communist Party, and the Red Army. The aim of soviet organization obviously was to make every man, woman, or child a member of something, with definite work assigned to him to perform.

KEY FIGURE

Edgar Snow (1905–72)

An American Communist who became a confidant of Mao. Although his writings are now sometimes criticised for having been too sympathetic to Mao, they contributed significantly to the West's understanding of Chinese communism.

As described in Source C, what methods did the CCP use to control the local population? ?

Mao's Rectification Movement

Despite its claim to be a movement of liberation, the brand of communism that Mao developed at Yanan was fundamentally oppressive. Discipline and obedience were required of all those living under it. Mao had begun to manifest a belief that was to become a dominant feature of his outlook, the notion of **revolutionary correctness**. He held that, unless the party maintained a constant struggle against reactionary thinking, the revolution would be betrayed from within. For Mao, an obvious danger was that those responsible

KEY TERM

Revolutionary correctness The idea that Chinese communism (Maoism) was a body of political, social and economic truth which all CCP members had to accept and live by.

KEY TERMS

Rectification
The disciplining of party members who were guilty of incorrect political thinking or actions.

Revisionist Reactionary, anti-party, anti-Mao thinking.

Show trial Public hearing in which the accused, whose guilt is assumed, is paraded as an enemy of the people.

KEY FIGURES

Kang Sheng (1898–1975)
Trained in Moscow in interrogation techniques, he became Mao's feared security and intelligence chief.

Wang Shiwei (1906–47)
The son of a mandarin scholar, Wang, a believer in social justice, was offended by the CCP's coercive way of promoting communism.

Ding Ling (1904–86)
Imprisoned at various times by both the GMD and the CCP, Ding was a prolific novelist and essayist and remained a lifelong feminist.

for running the party would become a bureaucratic, self-justifying elite. To fight this tendency, in 1942 he launched a '**rectification** of conduct' campaign. Party members were to engage in public self-criticism, which required that they admit their errors in front of assembled party members. To assist them in discovering where they had gone wrong in their thinking, they were obliged to study prescribed texts, among which Mao's own writings figured prominently.

The chief organiser of the purge was Mao's head of security, **Kang Sheng**. A frightening figure, who dressed totally in black, carried a black whip and rode a jet-black horse, Kang, asserting that 70 per cent of the party were infected by **revisionist** ideas, made it his task to expose and punish them. In Mao's name, Kang ordered the arrest of some 1000 CCP members, many of whom were subsequently imprisoned and tortured. Such was their treatment that 60 Communist Party officials killed themselves rather than undergo public humiliation. Mao did relent a little in the light of such grim news and lessened the severity of the campaign, but he was in no way apologetic about the need for the rectification process itself. He curtly dismissed suggestions that individual suffering should be allowed to modify party policy. In 1942, he wrote: 'Some comrades do not understand the Party's system of democratic centralism; they do not understand that the Party's interests are above personal interests.'

Notable victims of the rectification campaign were **Wang Shiwei** and **Ding Ling**. Wang was a brilliant young Communist writer who in 1942 published an article heavily critical of members of the CCP who lived comfortable lives in Yanan while Red Army comrades were dying in the struggle against the Japanese and the GMD. For this, he was rounded on by those party officials who felt they had been implicitly accused. Mao, angered by Wang Shiwei's charge that he as leader was disporting himself irresponsibly with pretty young women, backed the officials and chose to attack Wang as representing the intellectual class he despised. By intellectuals, Mao meant those who merely talked and theorised rather than acted.

Initially, a number of other writers came to Wang's defence. One of these was the feminist Ding Ling, who had joined the CCP only to be shocked by what she regarded as the party's hypocrisy in relation to the principle of female equality. The CCP claimed to treat women as equals, but her experience was that women in the party were in practice treated as inferiors. However, when Ding made her findings public she was brought before a party gathering and accused of insulting the CCP. She broke under the pressure, withdrew her previous criticisms and also abandoned Wang Shiwei. Left friendless, Wang was then subjected to a **show trial** at which he was accused of 'anti-Party thinking'. He resisted courageously, refusing to retract what he had written. His temerity earned him a life sentence and eventual execution in 1947 on Mao's personal order. His body was chopped into small bits and thrown down a well.

Wang Shiwei's treatment had the intended effect. It terrified the CCP's officials. Between 1943 and 1944, leading party members came forward to engage in public self-criticism. It was an extraordinary spectacle. Expressing contrition for past mistakes, they pledged total loyalty to Mao Zedong and the party. Even Zhou Enlai admitted to having been laggardly in supporting Mao Zedong.

Consequences of the Rectification Movement

Among the consequences were the following:

- Mao had rid himself of opposition and consolidated his position as leader.
- He had finally triumphed over the pro-Moscow wing of the party.
- He had begun to move towards **cult status** in Yanan.
- Chinese communism was now so closely identified with him personally that it had become Maoism.
- Mao was elected chairman of the Central Committee of the CCP in 1943.
- By 1945, Mao was being regularly referred to as the 'Great Helmsman'.

KEY TERM

Cult status A position that entitles the holder to a special veneration among the people and puts him or her beyond criticism.

3 The Guomindang under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kaishek)

▶ *What policies did the Nationalist government pursue under Jiang Jieshi?*

Jiang Jieshi's political attitudes

Jiang Jieshi had fought his way to the leadership of the GMD in a power struggle that followed the death of Sun Yatsen in 1925. Before this, Jiang had gone to the USSR in the early 1920s to receive revolutionary training, but his experiences there, rather than drawing him to Marxism, did the opposite. His returned to China with an abiding detestation of communism. This became the motif of his political career. He remained firm in his conviction that China could not progress towards true modernity unless it first destroyed Mao's Communists.

Jiang Jieshi's life was dominated by military considerations. He thought of politics in militaristic terms. At its starkest, this meant that he approached issues not by discussion and concession but by destroying opposition. In this respect, he was very similar to his great adversary Mao, who thought in terms of dialectical struggle.

Jiang Jieshi's ideology

The defeat of the warlords by the United Front and the near destruction of the Communists in the White Terror appeared to give Jiang the freedom to shape the new China according to the GMD's policies. From Nanjing, which in 1928



Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kaishek)

1883	Born to a middle-class family
1906	Entered military academy
1908	Joined Sun Yatsen's Alliance League
1912–18	Began developing contacts with Shanghai's underworld leaders
1918	Joined Sun Yatsen at Guangzhou
1924	Spent time in Moscow
1925	Became GMD leader
1926–8	Led the United Front on the Northern Expedition
1927	Launched the White Terror against the CCP
1928–34	Head of the Nanjing government
1931–4	Organised encirclement campaigns against Communists
1936	Kidnapped at Xian and obliged to reform the United Front
1937	Declared the beginning of a national struggle against the Japanese
1938	Renewed his military campaign against the CCP
1941–5	Gained international recognition for his leadership of China's resistance to Japan
1945–9	Defeated by Communists in Civil War
1949–75	Created the GMD-dominated Chinese republic in Taiwan
1975	Died

Achievements

In one obvious sense, Jiang Jieshi's record before 1949 was a failure. Having had the Communists on the run and having been the dominant force in China for over a decade, he had then lost the Civil War and been forced from the Chinese mainland. Yet it is possible to draw a different picture by emphasising his considerable successes. Prior to his defeat by the Communists in 1949, Jiang had triumphed over the Japanese, becoming in the process the internationally recognised spokesman of his nation. In the face of huge problems he had begun the process of modernising China and freeing it from foreign domination. His supporters then, and some writers since, have gone further by arguing that but for the destructive opposition of the Communists he would have reached his ultimate goal of creating a united people wedded to the progressive Three People's Principles inherited from Sun Yatsen.

Limitations

Against such glowing tributes and projections are the views of his contemporary opponents and later critics who characterised him as essentially a ruthless warlord, who, having taken power through violent means, proceeded to run a government that was corrupt and inefficient, in league with gangsters and able to sustain itself only by becoming reliant on foreign capital. Jiang's constant willingness to compromise his principles meant that the conditions of the Chinese people deteriorated rather than improved. He had failed to meet any of the high expectations with which he and his party had come to power.

officially replaced Beijing as China's capital, Jiang planned to build Nationalist China on the basis of the Three People's Principles, first enunciated by Sun Yatsen (see page 68).

As Jiang saw it, China's instability did not permit him to introduce democracy immediately. There were too many difficulties in the way. That is why he turned to Sun Yatsen's definition as a guide. Sun had taught that the circumstances in China meant that the Three People's Principles could not be put into effect until China had gone through three stages of development:

- a preliminary stage which would witness the overthrow by the Nationalist armies of China's internal and external enemies

- an intermediate 'tutelage' stage of GMD dominance during which the people would be educated in political knowledge and values
- a final stage in which the now enlightened people would play their part in turning China into a full democracy.

Jiang claimed that the preliminary stage of development had been achieved by the defeat of the warlords. China was now at the tutelage stage, which required that the GMD take on the role of government and teacher and instruct the Chinese people in political understanding. What this meant in reality was that Jiang's Nationalist government claimed the right to govern until such time as it considered China ready for democracy. It provided a justification for authoritarian control by Jiang and the GMD. A symbol of this was the dismantling of the remnants of the republican regime in Beijing, which was renamed **Beiping** to indicate that authority had passed south to Nanjing.

KEY TERM

Beiping Meaning 'northern peace' to distinguish it from Beijing, which meant 'northern capital'.

Jiang's leadership

Of considerable value to Jiang in attempting to exercise personal control over the GMD was the fact that the party had been structured along Leninist lines. This was a result of the Comintern having had a major influence on the development of the party in its early days. The Comintern believed that the GMD met the criteria of a bourgeois revolutionary party playing its role in the dialectical process. That was why they had urged the CCP to join forces with the Nationalists and work for a bourgeois revolution, which China had to go through before it could move to the proletarian stage. Comintern agents in 1924 had drafted a new GMD constitution which was clearly Leninist in character. The key element was the insistence that the party should operate on the principle of 'democratic centralism'. Jiang found this a convenient mechanism and justification for demanding conformity from the party.

Jiang's economic and social policies

In keeping with his assumption that the Nationalists had the right to govern without challenge, Jiang introduced a number of reforms from the top. These included:

- China's civil service was modernised by the creation of special administrative departments and training colleges.
- Measures to improve the quality and availability of education were implemented.
- Chinese banks were brought under the central control of the Bank of China.
- The Shanghai stock exchange became an international financial market.
- A National Resources Commission was set up to develop Chinese industry and negotiate foreign trade deals.
- Schemes were adopted to improve urban transport and communication. Modern buses and trams appeared in major cities, and railways and airlines spread across China.

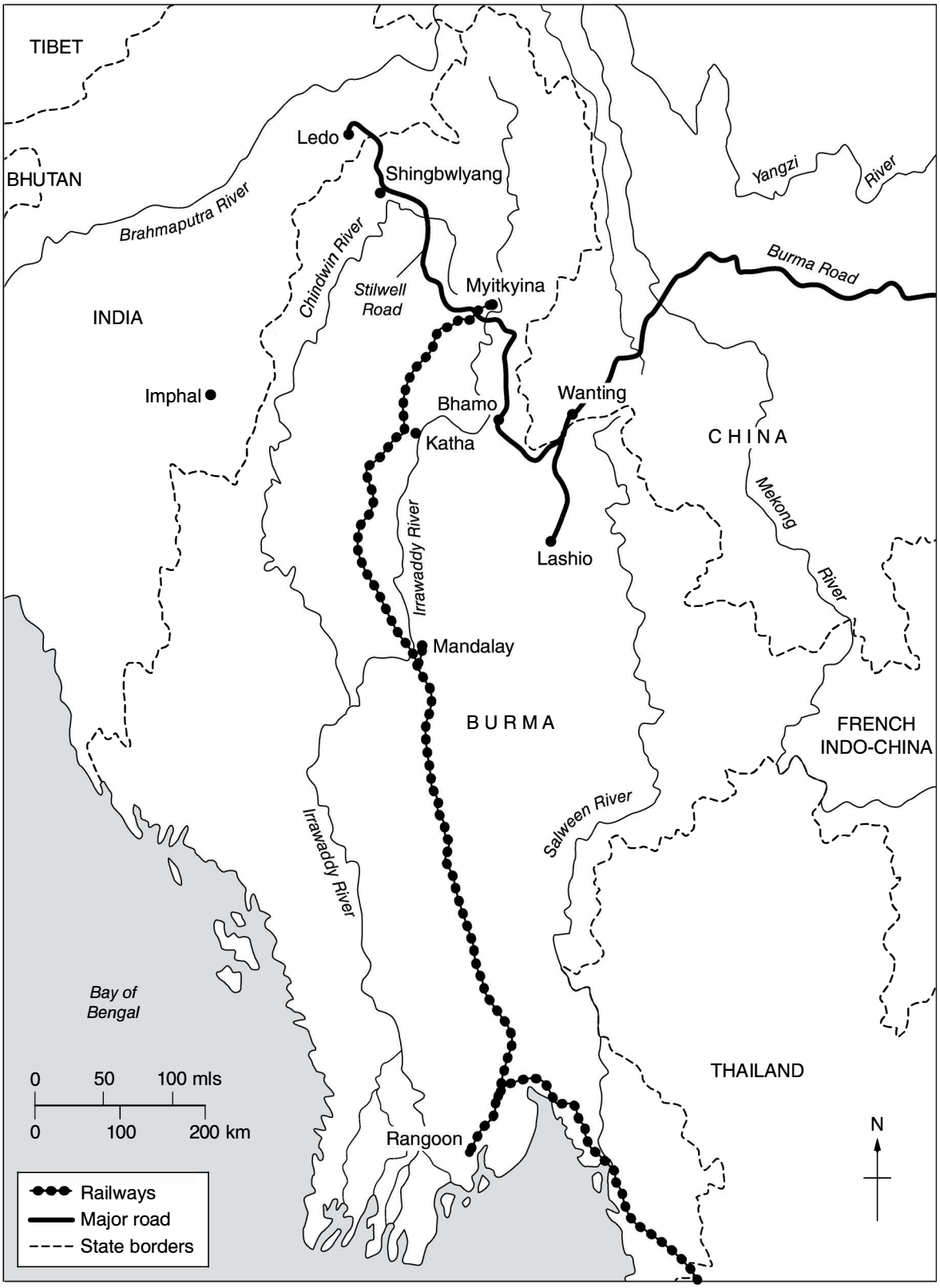


Figure 4.4 The Burma road in the late 1930s.

- Government subsidies were provided to help the Chinese film industry, based mainly in Shanghai, which become internationally renowned.
- Similar government support enabled fashion houses in Shanghai to compete with Paris and Milan.
- Telegraphy and road-building developments were undertaken.

Road building

Although important developments in communications had occurred in the late Manchu period, an area that had been largely neglected was road building. China did not have anything approaching a modern road until 1906. Prompted in part by the need to move its troops effectively in the struggle against the Japanese and the Communists, the GMD undertook a road-building programme. By 1949, Nationalist China could boast some 50,000 miles of road. It is true that these were not of the highest standard, having only a gravel or flattened earth surface, but they did provide China with its first serviceable road network. The most striking achievement was the Burma Road (see Figure 4.4). Completed by the late 1930s, this was a 700-mile passable stretch whose northern section in China's Kunming province had been constructed by 200,000 Chinese labourers hacking their way through thick jungle. The urgency with which it was built is explained by the need to transport war materials from Rangoon into China.

Telecommunications

The GMD's preoccupation with war for most of its time in government meant that its plans for technical improvements in communications related to military needs. Nevertheless, in the 1930s it did establish Chinese control of the country's telephone and telegraph system, which previously had been in the hands of foreign-owned companies. The achievement appears more modest when it is remembered that the telephone system was restricted to major cities and that only one in 500 of the population had access to a phone.

Sung Tzu-wen (T.V. Soong)

A powerful influence behind the GMD's reform policies was Sung Tzu-wen.

China Development Finance Corporation (CDFC)

One of Sung's major initiatives was the establishment in 1934 of the China Development Finance Corporation (CDFC). Sung's aim was to raise capital from within China from enterprises prepared to invest in mining and industry. With this achieved, the corporation's reputation quickly grew and it soon become China's major institution as a dealer and broker in foreign investment and exchange. It produced very large dividends for the shareholders who rushed to buy into it. Within a few years, the CDFC had taken over nearly all the other state corporations and a close relationship had developed between the government's finance ministers and the CDFC's board of directors.



Sung Tzu-wen (T.V. Soong)

1891	Born
1910–15	Trained as an economist in Shanghai and the USA
1920–30	Held various financial posts
1928–34	Governor of the Central Bank of China and minister of finance
1934	Founded the China Development Finance Corporation
1940–5	Jiang's special representative in the USA
	Negotiated large loans from the USA for China's war against Japan
1945	Led Chinese delegation at conference creating the United Nations
1945	Became resident in the USA, where he represented the pro-GMD lobby
1971	Died

Background

Sung was a Western-educated, widely travelled and highly successful businessman who reputedly became the richest man in China.

Political role

Sung could draw on his close connection with the international money world and, indeed, with China's underworld, in his plans for giving the Nationalist government financial stability. That he was able to achieve balanced budgets, even if only in certain years, indicated the level of his success. Intent on modernising China's banking system, Sung, more than anyone, was responsible for such financial and economic progress as China made under Nationalist rule. As brother-in-law of Sun Yatsen and Jiang Jieshi, he moved in the highest GMD circles; it was said there was no political or economic question on which he was not consulted. Sung showed himself an able negotiator, liaising with the USA to raise support for China's war effort in the 1930s. He also travelled to Moscow in 1945 to set up the Sino-Soviet treaty, which gained Soviet recognition of the GMD as the legitimate government of China.

Significance

Although not above shady deals himself, Sung's dilemma was that he was trying to follow progressive policies within a regime that was reluctant to embrace genuine social change. His career illustrated the difficulty of trying to apply the ideas of the Three People's Principles, on which the GMD was supposedly based, in a society in which the unrepresentative but dominant middle class were unwilling to engage in the necessary redistributive and egalitarian policies. Since Jiang Jieshi's government was dependent not on the people overall but on a small elite of financial and business interests, its commitment to genuine economic reform was unlikely to be sustained.

The drawback was that little of the huge amounts of money generated by the corporation found its way back into the Chinese economy. Jiang Jieshi's close ties with the underworld, which included some very dubious financiers and tycoons, meant that his government hesitated to tax the wealthy money-makers. A coterie of rich Chinese in government and the finance houses were the beneficiaries of the CDFC's success. It was an aspect of the corruption indelibly associated with the GMD regime (see page 97). However, what eventually undermined China's banking system was not simply corruption but the **hyperinflation** that struck China in the 1940s, a product of the conflict with Japan and the Chinese Civil War (see page 121).

KEY TERM

Hyperinflation A fall in the value of money that is so rapid and sustained that it destroys purchasing power and savings.

Inflation

In 1941, the chronic but relatively mild rise in prices which China had experienced throughout the republican period began to climb uncontrollably.

The soaring inflation had been caused initially by the Japanese occupation after 1937 of China's most prosperous and productive provinces. After 1945, the cost of maintaining an army of 5 million troops accounted for nearly 80 per cent of the government's expenditure. To meet its revenue needs, the government imposed heavy taxes and nationalised China's private banks and finance houses. It also borrowed heavily from abroad and greatly increased the issue of paper currency.

These measures produced a drastic fall in the value of money, a trend that was intensified by the huge military expenditure occasioned by the war.

After 1945, **inflation** became hyperinflation. By 1949, China's monetary system had collapsed. Even had it had the will to do so, the government was prevented by financial bankruptcy from addressing the great social problems facing China. Financial failure demoralised the people and discredited the GMD government economically and politically. Even had the Nationalists not been defeated in the Civil War, it is difficult to see how they could have survived the financial collapse over which they presided.

KEY TERM

Inflation A fall in the value and, therefore, the purchasing power of money (most sharply felt by ordinary Chinese when they found that the items they bought became increasingly expensive).

Table 4.1 Inflation in China 1937–48

Year	Total nominal value of notes in circulation (in millions of Chinese dollars)	Price index (100 in 1937)*
1937	2,060	100
1938	2,740	176
1939	4,770	323
1940	8,440	724
1941	15,810	1,980
1942	35,100	6,620
1943	75,400	22,800
1944	189,500	75,500
1945	1,031,900	249,100
1946	3,726,100	627,000
1947	33,188,500	10,340,000
1948	374,762,200	287,700,000

* This is the cost of a selected set of basic of goods at a given date (in this case 1937) against which the cost at any other time is then calculated. The first measurement is always set as a standard of 100.

Policy towards the foreign concessions

One of Jiang's aims was to reassert some degree of control over the foreign concessions whose presence had angered Chinese revolutionaries for decades. Efforts were made to restructure the legal system within the concessions so that Chinese law played a more central role. Foreign commercial companies were required to pay higher export and import duties. However, because of the constant presence of foreign troops, Jiang was not in a position to attempt the physical removal of foreigners.

Jiang was also handicapped by the hard truth that many Chinese depended for their livelihoods on being employed in the diplomatic offices and commercial agencies within the concession areas. Such reliance on foreigners, particularly in financial matters, was one of the great problems that prevented the Nanjing government from achieving the Chinese independence that the Three People's Principles advocated. Jiang's dislike of the foreign presence in China was real enough but he had to be circumspect in the way he dealt with the issue. As his various schemes for boosting China's economic and financial standing indicated, he needed foreign support. This became increasingly so after the Japanese threat to China began to grow following the occupation of Manchuria in 1931 (see page 102).

German influence in Nationalist China

China's foreign ties were also very evident in relation to Jiang's development of the Nationalist army and police forces. In planning to modernise his army, Jiang formed close links with the **Third Reich**, which sent military advisers to train the Nationalist forces.

A further striking example of German influence was the organisation of Jiang's secret police, the **Blue Shirts**, on similar lines to the ***Gestapo***. It was such associations that led to the suggestion that Jiang Jieshi's regime merited the description '**fascist**', since in its authoritarianism, nationalist ideology and policing methods it paralleled the right-wing governments of Europe in the 1930s, such as Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. A central figure in the development of the Blue Shirts was **Dai Li**, whose fearsome leadership of the GMD's secret police earned him the nickname 'the Chinese Himmler' after the *Gestapo* chief in Nazi Germany.

KEY TERMS

Third Reich Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime 1933–45.

Blue Shirts 'The Society for the Practice of the Three Principles of the People', a force largely recruited from officers at the Nationalist Military Academy in Nanjing whose main task was hunting down Communists.

Gestapo The Nazi secret police.

Fascist Referring strictly only to Mussolini's Italy, the word came to be applied to all the nationalistic, authoritarian regimes of the period.

KEY FIGURE

Dai Li (1897–1946)

A graduate of GGD Military Academy at Whampoa.

Jiang's secret police

Dai Li built up the innocuous sounding Investigation and Statistical Bureau (ISB) into a highly effective and feared security organisation. By the mid-1930s, Dai had some 1800 agents working for him. Operating outside the law, they were free to arrest and hold suspects indefinitely without having to bring charges against them. They regularly used torture to extract information concerning the names and whereabouts of Communist sympathisers. CCP members were Dai Li's main targets but his agents also used intimidation and threats to prevent even moderate criticism of the Nationalist regime being voiced in the press.

The New Life Movement

Despite his Nationalist regime's preoccupation with economic and military affairs and state security, Jiang Jieshi always spoke in terms of his party and government leading a moral revolution. In this period, there were two main themes in his speeches and writings:

- the need for the Chinese people to unite and crush the Communists
- the duty of the Chinese people to elevate the ethical standards of their country by returning to Confucian values of social harmony and by living lives of moral integrity.

He appealed to the people to expose and fight public corruption and called on youth organisations, such as the Boy Scouts and the YMCA, which Western missionaries had brought to China, to set an example in teaching the young to behave responsibly, especially in sexual matters. To inculcate a sense of shared Nationalist values, he encouraged couples to include a pledge of loyalty to the GMD in their marriage vows. This programme of moral improvement was formalised in 1934 with Jiang's launching of the 'New Life Movement', intended as a rejection of both communism and Western capitalism and a reassertion of Confucian values. Jiang's wife, **Soong Meiling**, regarded the New Life Movement, which she defined as 'a direct attempt to compete with the Communist platform of economic and social reform, substituting a retreat to Confucius for an advance to Marx', as being 'the only path for the salvation of the country'.

KEY FIGURE

Soong Meiling (1898–2003)

Vivacious and fashionable, she acted as Jiang's interpreter and adviser and became an international celebrity, raising the image of Nationalist China.

The weakness of the New Life Movement

For all the moral uplift that Jiang and his wife sought to encourage among the people, the reality was that his government had compromised itself from the first by its need to deal with some of the most disreputable elements in Chinese society. This was apparent, for example, in its attempts to control the use of drugs. Jiang's sincere aim was to bring the opium trade under state control and provide treatment for addicts. But the GMD had received considerable illicit funding from gangster organisations, such as the **Green Gang**. The Nationalists were reluctant to forgo such income. It was also the case that Jiang had received crucial assistance from the drug-dealing underworld in his anti-Communist campaigns; he owed the gangs a large favour.

KEY TERM

Green Gang Shanghai racketeers who dealt mainly in drug running, and who were notorious for bribing police and government officials.

The same contradictions applied to Jiang's attempt to follow a socialist path and end China's reliance on capitalism. His need for inward foreign investment and the heavy costs of his military campaigns meant that he could never genuinely abandon capitalism. Despite his professed adherence to the party's policy of ending China's dependence on foreign money, Jiang could not discontinue his association with Western commercial and financial interests. The character of the GMD Party in government was determined by the manner in which it acquired its finance.

The GMD's basic problems in government

Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists suffered from a number of besetting weaknesses that prevented them from becoming fully effective or genuinely popular.

Social composition

The underlying political problem for the GMD was that the social composition of its membership meant that it could never become a mass party. It claimed that its revolutionary purpose was to serve the Chinese population as a whole by implementing the Three People's Principles, but in reality it became the representative of particular minority interests. Jiang Jieshi's party was largely drawn from the merchants and businessmen who operated in the ports and cities. Such men had little sympathy for the rural peasants, which meant they were no more interested in improving conditions in the countryside than they were in paying for welfare in the urban areas. Therein lay the GMD's crippling limitation as a political party.

Failure to alleviate poverty

China's most pressing problem was the poverty of its people. In the years 1934–5, another of China's recurrent famines caused the death of 30 million Chinese. Yet, notwithstanding the Nationalists' commitment to honouring the third of Sun Yatsen's principles – the people's welfare – no sustained attempt was made to tackle the issue. There was little in the Nationalists' approach to government that allowed them to make a genuine effort to introduce the land reforms the GMD had originally promised. Among the measures that Jiang's government had failed to implement were the following:

- ending of landlord control and exploitation of the peasants
- extension of property rights to the peasants
- protection of the peasants against excessive rents
- guarantee of fair prices to the peasants for their produce.

The Yellow River flooding 1938

An event that is often cited as a particular illustration of Jiang Jieshi's lack of genuine concern for the Chinese people was his order in June 1938 to open the dikes at Zhengzhou and allow the Yellow River to flood surrounding regions. In the event, large areas in three provinces, Henan, Anhui and Jiangsu, were inundated. Conservative estimates suggest that 800,000 people were drowned and millions more made homeless refugees. The Nationalist government asserted that the flooding was a necessary step to prevent the spread of the Japanese armies. Critics, however, claimed that the tactical gains from this were greatly outweighed by the appalling loss of life and property, a consequence of Jiang's disregard for the people's real needs.

Regional limitations on GMD government control

At no time did Jiang's government control more than one-third of China or two-thirds of its population. It is true that these were quite substantial proportions in themselves, but, given the strength of Chinese regionalism and the distribution of the population, the authority exercised by the GMD was far from complete.

Resistance from local ruling factions was a major obstacle preventing the Nanjing government from carrying through its declared policies of land reform. Moreover, despite the impressive victories of the Northern Expedition, the warlords still held sway in a number of provinces. The limitation this placed on GMD control was increased after 1937 when the Japanese occupied large tracts of territory (see page 106), a humiliating reminder of how far China was from being an independent nation.

The Nationalist record

Nationalist supporters could claim that in its first period of government the GMD under Jiang Jieshi had:

- undermined the warlords
- gained international recognition
- taken steps towards the creation of workable governmental and legal systems
- developed modern communications.

Yet, while these were not insignificant achievements, it could be argued that they were far outweighed by failures:

- The Nationalist government had proved unable to tackle China's most urgent social and economic problems.
- It had betrayed its own sense of moral purpose by aligning with some of the worst elements of the Chinese underworld.
- It had turned to coercion and authoritarianism in order to consolidate its power.
- It had been powerless to prevent or alleviate the suffering of the victims of widespread famine.
- Jiang's preoccupation with crushing his Communist opponents had diverted vital energies away from the structuring of an ordered civil society.
- Such progress as had been made towards removing foreign dominance from China had been undermined by the Japanese occupation of China that began in 1931.

Chapter summary

At first, the Nationalists and Communists cooperated in a United Front in order to break the warlords but, having achieved this by 1927, Jiang turned savagely on the Communists. He intended their complete destruction, an aim in which he nearly succeeded; by 1934, the Communists were on the point of extinction having being penned in their Jiangxi base by surrounding GMD forces. However, the Communists survived by a desperate flight that took the form of the legendary Long March. In the new northern base of Yanan, reached in 1935, Mao began to construct an authoritarian soviet in defiance of the GMD and of the Japanese who had begun to occupy parts of China in 1931.

In 1936, two parties competed for power: the GMD led by Jiang Jieshi and the CCP led by Mao Zedong. Intermittently in alliance in a national struggle against the occupying Japanese, the two parties remained mutually hostile. Mao ruthlessly imposed himself on his followers in a way that Jiang, although nominally head of the Chinese republic, was never able to do on his. Despite his claims that the Nationalists were leading a regenerated China, Jiang was beset by problems, many of his own making, which weakened his authority.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. Why was Sun Yatsen willing to cooperate with the Comintern?
2. What motives lay behind the Soviet Union's involvement in revolutionary China?
3. What were the perceived advantages and disadvantages for the CCP of a merger with the GMD?
4. What impact did the 30 May Incident have on GMD–CCP relations?
5. What was the political significance of Sun Yatsen's death?
6. How successful was the Northern Expedition?
7. Why did Jiang Jieshi launch the White Terror?
8. What lay at the base of the disagreements between Mao and the 'Twenty-eight Bolsheviks'?
9. What revolutionary role did Mao ascribe to the peasants?
10. How did Mao's Communists impose themselves on the 'liberated areas'?
11. What were the main characteristics of Mao's land policies?
12. How did the GMD government deal with the issue of the foreign presence in China?
13. What principles inspired the New Life Movement?
14. What factors undermined the New Life Movement?
15. Why did inflation prove so damaging to the Nationalist government?
16. How successful had Jiang's Nationalist government been in the period 1928–41?

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. How far was Mao Zedong responsible for the survival and spread of the CCP in the years 1927–45?
2. 'There was little difference between the policies of Mao's Communists and Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists.' How far do you agree with this opinion regarding the land policies followed by the CCP and the GMD in the years 1927–41?

CHAPTER 5

The Japanese threat and Communist takeover 1931–49

Japan had long harboured designs on Chinese territory and resources. In 1931, it made its first major move by occupying the resource-rich northern province of Manchuria. From there, it began to spread out over other parts of China, establishing, as in Manchuria, Japanese puppet regimes. A full-scale Sino-Soviet war broke out in 1937 when Japan, on a flimsy pretext, decided to extend its control over a much wider area of China. The war was to have a profound influence on China's internal politics and its international relations. It prepared the way for the Communists' takeover of China in 1949. These developments are studied under the following headings:

- ★ The Japanese occupation of China 1931–7
- ★ The Sino-Japanese War 1937–41
- ★ The Sino-Japanese War 1941–5
- ★ The Communist takeover 1945–9

Key dates

1931	Mukden Incident
1932	Manchuguo created
	Shanghai resistance
1933	Japan withdrew from the League of Nations
	Treaty of Tanggu
1936	Xian Incident
1937	Marco Polo Bridge Incident
	Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing fell to Japan
	Rape of Nanjing
1938	GMD capital moved from Nanjing to Chongqing
1940	100 Regiments Campaign
1941	Pearl Harbor attack brought USA into Sino-Japanese War
1944	Ichigo Offensive
1945	Atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
	Japanese surrender
1946–9	Chinese Civil War
1949	Mao declared the creation of the PRC
	Jiang Jieshi fled to Taiwan

1 The Japanese occupation of China 1931–7

▶ *What steps did Japan take to occupy China between 1931 and 1937?*

Prelude: Japanese designs on China before 1931

In the 1920s, Japan experienced a severe economic recession. This encouraged the Japanese government to intensify the aggressive designs it had on China, which it had shown earlier in 1915 and 1919 (see pages 59 and 64). Japanese hostility was not simply aggression for its own sake. There was in Japan at this time a genuine fear that, unless it took immediate steps to acquire living space for its population and resources for its industries, it would be unable to sustain itself as a modern state. There was a feeling that if it did move quickly to expand its territory and increase its supplies, it would enter into irreversible national decline. To avoid this, Chinese land and resources must be seized as a first step towards much wider Japanese control of east Asia and the western Pacific. Such plans were the forerunners of what became known as the '**Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere**', a Japanese euphemism for its own imperial expansion.

KEY TERMS

Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere
Theoretically, cooperation between Japan and China, but in reality Japanese domination of China.

Guangdong army
The Japanese army already stationed in Guangdong province.

The Manchurian Crisis 1931–3

The Japanese were deceptive in their dealings with China; in secret they sought to destabilise the Chinese republic while at the same time openly claiming that the instability in China gave them a right to interfere there in order to protect Japan's vital interests. This was evident in a Japanese-provoked confrontation in the Manchurian capital Mukden (Shenyang). The Mukden Incident, as it was called, provided the pretext for the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931.

In September 1931, a group of Japanese officers in the **Guangdong army**, acting on its own initiative, concocted a plot in which it blew up a stretch of the southern Manchurian railway at Mukden and then blamed the act on Chinese saboteurs. The officers, who were in league with the pro-war party in Tokyo, then appealed to the Japanese government to authorise the punishment of the Chinese.

Without waiting for a response, the Guangdong army launched a full-scale sweep across Manchuria. Within six months the province was under Japanese military occupation. The Tokyo government, which had been initially reluctant to give full backing to the Guangdong army, found itself swept along by war mania in Japan. Dismissing the doubts raised by its more moderate members, the government sanctioned the formal takeover of Manchuria and then defended its actions against the international protests that followed.

Creation of Manchuguo

In 1932, the Japanese consolidated their occupation of Manchuria by formally changing its name to Manchuguo and declaring it to be an independent Chinese nation, ruled by Pu Yi, the last emperor of the Manchu dynasty (see page 50). But in reality it was a vassal state with a puppet leader under direct Japanese control. As with the Mukden Incident, the creation of Manchuguo was the result of a local Japanese initiative which the Tokyo government was then pressured into accepting. The expansionist drive in Japan was gaining an unstoppable momentum; in 1932, Japanese troops moved into Shanghai.

Shanghai's resistance

China's leader, Jiang Jieshi, waited nearly a month before making any military move. Having appealed to the **League of Nations** to condemn Japan, he hoped that the major powers would step in to prevent further encroachment. He was to be disappointed. The League did indeed pass a number of resolutions condemning Japanese aggression, but the powers took no action. In any case, Japan showed its contempt for international opinion by wholly ignoring the resolutions and then formally withdrawing from the League in 1933.

KEY TERM

League of Nations
The body set up in 1919 with the aim of settling future international disputes.

Once he realised there was no help coming from outside, Jiang ordered his forces to fight. They did so with resolution and courage. Shanghai's garrison commander, **Cai Tingkai**, led his troops in a fierce counter-attack. Japan sent in 20,000 extra troops and its navy bombarded the city. The savage encounter ended with 15,000 of the Chinese defenders dead or missing. The occupation of Shanghai had not been broken but the Chinese resistance did persuade the occupiers to come to terms. One result was the creation of a combined Sino-Japanese administration to run Shanghai. However, despite the appearance of cooperation, it was the Japanese who dominated the regime. Those Chinese who worked for the occupiers became collaborators, hated by their own people and despised by the Japanese, a pattern that was to be characteristic of the whole period of Japan's occupation of China.

KEY FIGURE

Cai Tingkai (1892–1968)
Fought against the Japanese as a commander of the NRA, but was forced into exile in 1934 when he opposed Jiang Jieshi. He later returned to China and joined the Chinese Communists.

Jiang Jieshi's response to the Japanese occupation

The initial reaction of all the Chinese parties to the occupation of Manchuria was to unite against Japan as the common enemy. But from the beginning, the unity was more apparent than real. Jiang Jieshi always regarded resistance to Japan as secondary to his aim of destroying the Communists. His basic strategy was to give ground before the Japanese invaders, judging that they would never be able to conquer such a vast country as China. Although there were occasions when he found it expedient to form a united front with the Communists against the invader, his priority remained the crushing of the Communist enemy within China (see page 89). In any case, whatever the United Front's declared objectives may have been, there was little chance of realising them immediately; Japan was too powerfully entrenched.

Treaty (Truce) of Tanggu, May 1933

With Shanghai under their effective control, the Japanese next set their eyes on Beijing. However, not wishing to have to fight over Beijing as they had over Shanghai, where they had suffered 2000 casualties, they offered Jiang a truce, albeit one on their terms. Desperate for a ceasefire and unable to resist Japanese pressure, Jiang instructed his negotiators to accept the Japanese demands. The result was the Treaty of Tanggu, whose main terms were:

- A demilitarised zone, stretching 65 miles south of the Great Wall, extending from Beijing to Tianjin, was to be created, with the Great Wall to be under Japanese control.
- Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist forces were debarred from entering the demilitarised zone.
- The demilitarised zone to be policed by a Japanese-controlled Peace Corps.

The wider significance of the Treaty of Tanggu was that it effectively marked the acceptance by Jiang's Nationalist government of Manchuguo and Japan's control of northern China. This did not end hostilities and Jiang remained committed to fighting the Japanese when he was in a better position to do so. He believed that China was too large a country for the Japanese to occupy without exhausting themselves; a protracted occupation would mean war and the eventual defeat of Japan. He defined his approach as 'trading space to buy time', giving ground to the Japanese so as to overstretch their resources and allow the Chinese the opportunity to build up their own strength. However, the policy of avoiding direct conflict with the occupier proved uninspiring and brought obvious political dangers. His supporters frequently found it difficult to maintain their loyalty. Throughout his time as leader of the Guamindong (GMD), Jiang was subject to opposition from within its ranks. It took him over a year to suppress a rising in 1933 among his troops at Fujian (Fukien), who were reacting against his failure to confront the Japanese.

Jiang suffered further damage to his reputation as a defender of China when between 1934 and 1935, Japanese troops fanned out from Manchuria into six other northern provinces. Rather than confront the Japanese, Jiang came to an agreement with them. He withdrew the GMD forces from Beijing and accepted that the newly occupied provinces be recognised as 'autonomous regions', to be administered by pro-Japanese officials. What was considered by many Chinese to have been craven behaviour by Jiang led to the **9 December Movement**, an episode in which outraged students in Beijing, Shanghai and Wuhan took to the streets in protest. The slogans on their banners conveyed the nature of their anger: 'End the New Imperialism', 'Stop the Civil War, Unite Against the Japanese Enemy'.

KEY TERM

9 December Movement
The title was meant to convey the continuity between this protest and the movements of 4 May 1919 and 30 May 1925.

Character of the Japanese occupation

The approach of the Japanese to their occupation of China had two main features. At the same time as they increased their control over the Chinese,

their ministers endeavoured to create better relations with China's leaders. This apparent contradiction followed from Japan's readiness, when expedient, to emphasise the historical links that bound the two peoples together. Japan argued that it made sense to look towards a common Sino-Japanese future. The Japanese were anxious to make east Asia an area of oriental resistance to Western domination. In 1936, Hirota Koki, Japan's foreign minister, showed intense irritation at the GMD's attempt to negotiate a special loan from the USA. He complained that Japan was now sufficient for all China's needs.

However, Koki punctuated his appeal to the common links between the two nations with demands that the Chinese recognise Japan's special rights and privileges in China. Clearly, Japanese notions of cooperation rested on the assumption that Japan would remain very much the dominant partner. This was evident in Japan's creation by 1934 of further collaborationist governments, on the Shanghai model, in Hebei and Inner Mongolia. These were termed 'Autonomous Councils', but they were far from being independent Chinese governments; like Manchuguo, they were simply a front behind which the Japanese maintained their control.

The Xian Incident 1936

The culmination of the deep Chinese dissatisfaction with Jiang Jieshi's response to the Japanese occupation came with the Xian Incident in December 1936. During a visit to Xian in Shaanxi province, which, ironically, Jiang had undertaken in order to berate his GMD forces for their slowness in crushing the Communists, he found the tables turned. He was seized by troops acting under the orders of General **Zhang Xueliang** (Chang Hsueh-liang), who had been persuaded by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to commit himself to the anti-Japanese struggle. After his arrest Jiang was handed over to the Communists, who offered to spare his life if he would promise to end his persecution of them and lead a genuine resistance against the Japanese. Finding himself in an impossible position, Jiang gave in and agreed to the following terms:

- to cease all attempts to suppress the CCP
- to recognise the CCP as a legitimate party
- to lead a new united front against the Japanese invader.

Neither side felt fully bound by the Xian agreement, as their continuing struggle against each other would show, but Mao's Communists came out of the Incident far better. They could now claim that it was they who were the genuine nationalists whose prime motivation was their love of China, as expressed in their willingness to fight under Jiang's leadership. At the same time, they had undermined the GMD's claim to be the sole representative of the nation. Moreover, although Jiang eventually went back on his word and renewed his campaigns against the Communists, Mao and his followers had at least gained a temporary respite from Nationalist attacks.

KEY FIGURE

Zhang Xueliang (1901–2001)

Sometimes known as 'the Young Marshal', the son of Zhang Zuolin, warlord of Manchuria until his assassination by the Japanese in 1928.

2 The Sino-Japanese War 1937–41

- *Why did the Chinese suffer so severely at the hands of the Japanese?*
- *Why was the United Front not able to offer effective resistance to the Japanese?*

In 1937, Japan extended its occupation of the northern Chinese provinces into a full-scale war against China that was to last until 1945.

The Sino-Japanese War divides into two distinct phases:

- 1937–41: during this first phase, Japan made rapid advances down the eastern seaboard (see the map on page 108) to which the Chinese response was a mixture of courageous resistance, retreat and appeasement.
- 1941–5: the second phase saw the Chinese struggle become part of the Second World War in which China, as an ally of the USA, recovered to gain victory over the Japanese.

Reasons for Japan's 1937 decision for all-out war

A number of factors came together to suggest to the Japanese government that it was justified in extending the occupation into a war:

- The war party in Japan argued that, as a result of the contraction in international trade that accompanied the worldwide **depression** in the 1930s, Japan could no longer sell its goods abroad. This commercial crisis made it imperative that Japan consolidate its hold over Asia, beginning with the total control of China.
- Since over 80 per cent of Japan's overseas investments were in China and a quarter of Japan's international trade was with China, it was necessary in a time of economic crisis that Japan have complete domination of China.
- Its armies' successes in China since 1931 gave Japan every confidence that total military control of the country was wholly feasible.
- Japan judged that the internal divisions among the Nationalists and Communists and the apparent half-hearted military response of China's leader, Jiang Jieshi, meant that future Chinese resistance could be relatively easily overcome.
- No outside power had yet formally intervened on China's behalf; Japan calculated that a swift defeat of China would rule out any possibility of this happening.
- Japan also calculated that in 1937 it had sufficient economic reserves, particularly of oil and rubber, for only three years ahead. Hence, it was necessary to tighten its grip on China, which would serve both as a source of vital supplies and as a base from which to extend into south-east Asia.
- Japan considered that time was not on its side. If it waited too long, the uncertainties of international politics might lead to its being isolated. The

KEY TERM

Depression Between 1929 and the late 1930s, there was a serious worldwide slump in industrial production and international trade.

hawks in Japan spoke of the danger of their country being encircled by a combination of the USA and the British, Dutch and French empires in Asia. Better, therefore, to complete its subjugation of China while Japanese forces were in the ascendant.

The Marco Polo Bridge Incident 1937

Being set on war, Japan needed only a justification for it. This duly came on 7 July 1937, when a relatively minor clash between Chinese and Japanese troops occurred at the Marco Polo Bridge, an important crossing point, ten miles outside Beijing. The confrontation had been deliberately planned by the Japanese to create trouble. Using the clash as a pretext, Japan demanded that, in order to prevent further trouble, the GMD government yield even further authority to the occupying forces in China. On this occasion, Jiang Jieshi refused to make concessions. He declared to the Chinese people that their country was now in a state of total war against Japan. 'If we allow one inch more of our territory to be lost, we shall be guilty of an unpardonable crime against our race.'

The Second United Front

Jiang's appeal for national unity may be regarded as the start of the second United Front between the CCP and GMD, a commitment by both parties to suspend their differences and ally against the Japanese aggressor. In doing this, they were activating the agreement they had made seven months earlier following the Xian Incident. However, the second United Front was never a genuine alliance. The CCP and GMD forces invariably fought as separate armies and, although they did liaise on occasion, their mutual distrust meant that they rarely acted as a combined force. Outweighed by Japanese military strength, which made them reluctant to risk large-scale battles, the Nationalist–Communist allies engaged mainly in sniping and **guerrilla** tactics.

KEY TERM

Guerrilla A hit-and-run style of fighting, avoiding pitched battles and using local knowledge of people and terrain to harass the enemy.

That the Chinese defenders were not in a position to face the Japanese in large-scale battles was soon evident from the fight for Shanghai, whose strategic importance was indicated by the huge efforts China and Japan put into the battle over it between August and November 1937. To gain or lose Shanghai would be to gain or lose control of central China.

The battle for Shanghai 1937

Throughout the war against Japan, Jiang Jieshi showed flawed tactical judgement. The battle for Shanghai in 1937 was a particular illustration of this:

- Initially, Jiang's forces held the initiative since GMD troops outnumbered the Japanese in the Shanghai area by over ten to one.
- A series of fortified block houses had been built along the railway linking Shanghai and Nanjing, giving the National Revolutionary Army (NRA) protected movement of men and supplies.

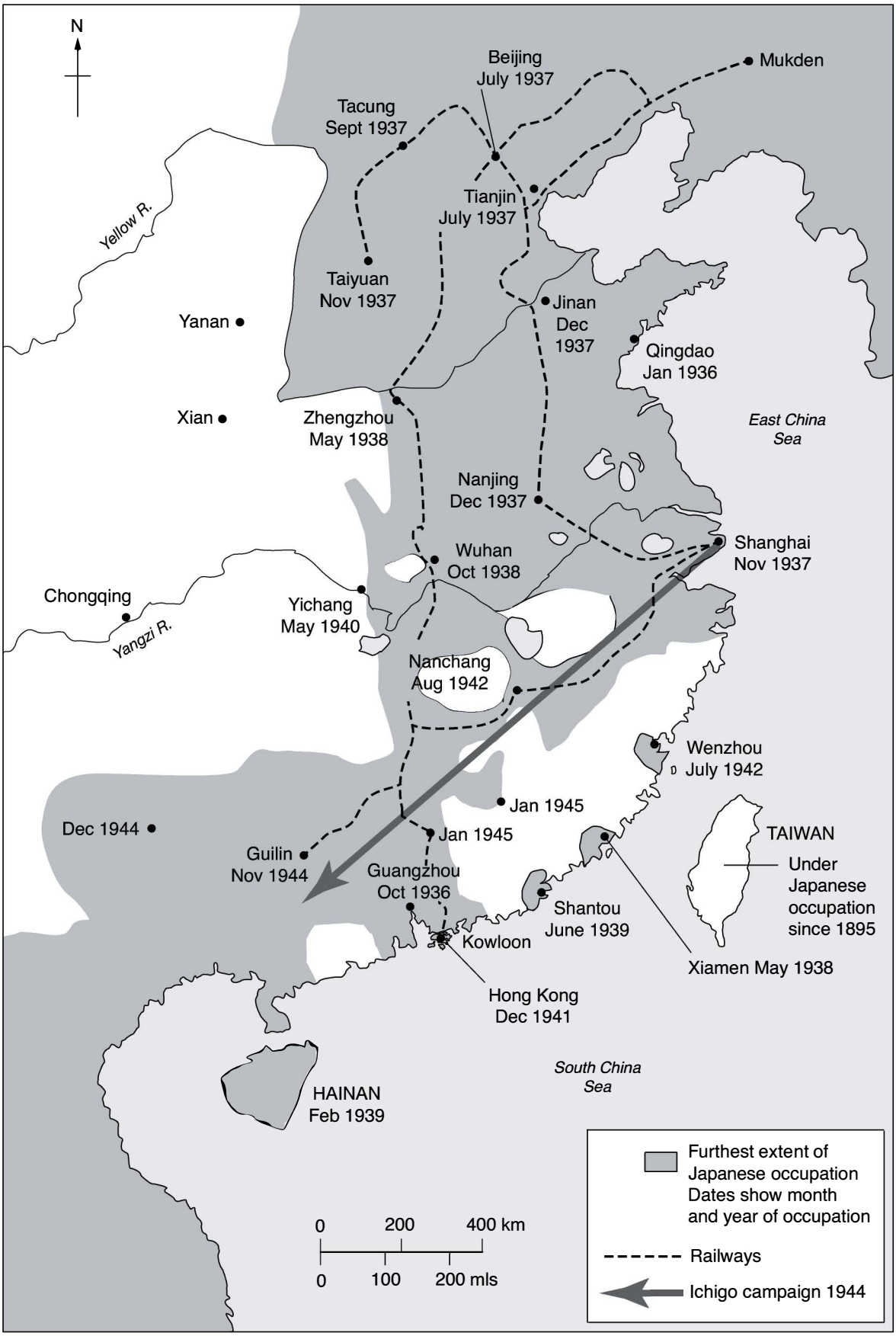


Figure 5.1 The Sino-Japanese War 1937–45.

- Since taking Shanghai in 1932, the Japanese had given little attention to strengthening their own defences, their warships in Shanghai harbour seeming to be particularly vulnerable.

In August, expecting to take the enemy by surprise, Jiang gave the order for his air force to begin bombing raids on the Japanese ships. But, by the time he gave the command, the attack was no longer a surprise since the NRA's written and radio messages had been intercepted; forewarned, the ships had raised anchor and broken formation. This disorientated the Chinese pilots, who missed their targets at sea and bombed Shanghai itself, in the process killing far more Chinese civilians than Japanese troops.

Claiming that the attack gave them the right to reinforce their position, the Japanese prepared to send a number of fresh divisions to the Shanghai region. Jiang, desperate to retake Shanghai before these divisions arrived, ordered an all-out attack on the city. Ferocious fighting ensued over a period of nine weeks. In a reversal of the Nationalists' initial attack, planes from the Japanese carriers bombed the Chinese positions outside Shanghai, an assault accompanied by heavy shelling from the Japanese warships. Attacks by Chinese ground troops were repeatedly repulsed by the Japanese, who were reinforced by newly arriving marine units.

The NRA's attempt to break the Japanese defences was finally abandoned when an amphibious Japanese landing south of Shanghai resulted in the Chinese being outflanked and open to attack from the rear. A retreat was ordered, but rather than being an orderly withdrawal towards Nanjing along the protective prepared lines, it became a rout. Sensing that Nanjing was now within their grasp, the Japanese rejected Jiang Jieshi's belated appeal for a truce. The casualty figures indicated the scale of the struggle over Shanghai: a quarter of a million Chinese were killed, while Japan suffered 50,000 losses.

By 1938, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Nanjing had all fallen to Japan, disasters which obliged the GMD government to withdraw their capital west up the Yangzi River to Chongqing (see the map on page 108). It was the taking of Nanjing that first brought to the world's attention the true character of the Japanese occupation of China.

Character of the war: Japanese brutality

The grimmest aspect of the Sino-Japanese War was the savagery with which the occupiers treated the Chinese. Easy military successes early in the war confirmed the deeply held conviction of the Japanese that they were a superior race, entitled to treat those they defeated with contempt. It was an equivalent Japanese notion to the Nazi concept of Germans as the master race. One of the commanders of the first Japanese invasion force to arrive in China in 1937, Sakai Ryu, declared: 'The Chinese people are bacteria infesting world civilization.' Lieutenant Ryukichi of the Imperial Japanese Army remarked to a foreign

correspondent, 'you and I have diametrically different views of the Chinese. You may be dealing with them as human beings, but I regard them as swine. We can do anything to such creatures.'

SOURCE A

? What is there about the photo in Source A that suggests it was posed?



The aftermath of a Japanese air raid on Shanghai in 1937. Although the picture appears to have been composed by the photographer, there is little doubt that what became an iconic image represented the reality of the Japanese bombardments of Chinese cities.

The rape of Nanjing 1937

It was the Japanese contempt for the Chinese that created the frenzied bloodlust which resulted in arguably one of the worst atrocities in twentieth-century warfare: the rape of Nanjing. In December 1937, after spirited resistance and the refusal of its defenders to surrender, the city eventually fell to the Japanese attackers. Responding to the specific instruction of their commander, Asaka Yasuhiko, 'to kill all captives', the Japanese soldiers engaged in a sustained month-long programme of murder and terror. The statistics tell the grim story:

- 300,000 Chinese people were slaughtered during the four-week period.
- The ways of killing included shooting, bayoneting, beheading, burying alive, soaking in kerosene and setting on fire, and suspending on meat hooks.
- 20,000 girls and women were serially raped regardless of their age. Many were so abused that they died from the rape itself or the mutilations that were inflicted afterwards.

- A Japanese private later confessed, 'We sent out coal trucks to the city streets and villages to seize a lot of women. And then each of them was allocated to 15 to 20 soldiers for sexual intercourse and abuse.'
- Half the city was burned to ashes.

Among the many eyewitness accounts was the following (Source B) diary entry:

SOURCE B

From an eyewitness account by a member of the International Committee of Westerners in Nanjing, quoted in Shuhsi Hsu, editor, *Documents of the Nanking Safety Zone*, Kelly & Walsh (Shanghai), 1939, pp. 34–7.

Robbery, murder, rape continued unabated. A rough estimate would be at least a thousand women raped last night and during the day. One poor woman was raped thirty-seven times. Another had her five months infant deliberately smothered by the brute to stop its crying while he raped her. Resistance means the bayonet …

On Ninghai Road, half a tin of kerosene oil was taken away from a boy by force and the boy bitterly beaten when asked to carry the same. At Yin Yang Ying at about 8 a.m. a Japanese grasped at food freely. At Pin Chen Shan No. 6, one pig was taken away by Japanese soldiers. A number of ponies have been taken away by five Japanese soldiers. Several girls living in No. 121 Ho Lu were raped after all the men living together with them as refugees were chased away. One teahouse master's daughter, aged 17 years, was raped by seven Japanese soldiers and died on the 18th. Last night, three Japanese soldiers raped four girls between six and ten o'clock. One old man reported his daughter was raped by several Japanese soldiers. Three girls were taken away by Japanese soldiers last night from the Girls' College and returned to No. 8 Tao Hsin Tsun in bad condition this morning. In Pin An Shan, a girl was raped by three Japanese soldiers and died. Raping, robbery, and searching are happening along the Yin Yang Ying.

The soldiers are looting the places mentioned above continually, and all the jewellery, money, watches, and clothes of any sort are taken away. At present, women of younger ages are forced to go with the soldiers every night who send motor trucks to take them and release them the next morning. More than 30 women and girls have been raped. The women and children are crying all the night. Conditions inside the compound are worse than we can describe.

In what ways do the details in Source B depict the manner in which Chinese civilians were treated by the Japanese occupiers? ?

The conduct of the Japanese troops in Nanjing was intended to spread terror among local populations throughout China by illustrating what would happen to them if they resisted. The only recourse for many Chinese in the occupied cities was to flee into the international concession areas in the hope that these would provide a safety zone which the Japanese would not enter. Sometimes, they received protection but, as shown in Source B, there were many instances when the Japanese simply ignored protocol and pursued the Chinese into the concessions. A resident in one of the concession areas in Nanjing recorded that

'the Japanese paid no heed to international law or justice. At night they climbed the wall that surrounded the "safety zone" and descended on the women inside.'

Although the behaviour of the troops in Nanjing was not officially sanctioned by Tokyo, the Japanese army in China had soon gained a worldwide notoriety for its savagery towards both its military and civilian captives. In the words of the **war-crimes arraignment**, 'Wherever the Japanese army went, they burned as well as committed mass murder.' Attempts were made by Japan to justify this as an act of retribution for a massacre in July 1937 of Japanese personnel by Chinese troops at Tongzhou, capital of the East Hebei puppet state. But it is significant that the Japanese government was at pains to prevent its own people from learning of the violence that invariably accompanied Japan's military conquests.

A living reminder today of Japan's war crimes is the knot of elderly ladies, known as '**comfort women**', dwindling in number year by year, who continue to gather on certain dates in China's main cities to demand compensation for the horrors they suffered 80 years earlier.

KEY TERMS

War-crimes arraignment In 1946, an International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) was set up in Tokyo, before which thousands of Japanese war criminals were arraigned and tried.

Comfort women Chinese females who were forced to work in the brothels specially set up for the troops of the Japanese army.

100 Regiments Campaign 1940

This offensive was undertaken by Mao's Communists to convince the GMD and the Chinese people of the dedication of the CCP to the anti-Japanese struggle. It followed a period of relative quiet when the Japanese, having seized a large number of provinces and cities by 1938, slowed their advance and concentrated on consolidating the gains already made. In August 1940, under the overall command of **Peng Dehuai**, the Communist forces, numbering 400,000 troops in over 100 regiments, undertook a series of attacks on Japanese positions in northern and central China. For two months the Communists had considerable success. A number of Japanese garrisons were overrun and over 600 miles of railway line destroyed along with extensive damage to roads, bridges and canals. However, by December 1940, the Japanese counter-offensive had regained the territory lost earlier. Some 100,000 Communists, a quarter of their force, were killed.

KEY FIGURE

Peng Dehuai (1898–1974)

One of Mao's ablest commanders and one of the few Communists with the courage to criticise Mao openly. Mao tolerated him because of his abilities as a soldier.

Recriminations followed within the CCP. Mao dismissed Peng Dehuai, not simply for being defeated by the Japanese but for causing the CCP to lose reputation among the Chinese people. What had also angered Mao was that the 100 Regiments Campaign had revealed to Jiang Jieshi the true size and disposition of the Communist forces. It was certainly the case that Jiang exploited the defeat of the Communists to renew his attack on them. In a set of ambushes and surprise raids in January 1941, the Nationalist forces inflicted 4000 casualties on the retreating Communists. It was clear that Jiang regarded them as a greater enemy than the Japanese. He was making a fiction of the supposed GMD–CCP United Front against the occupier.

Further Japanese terror

The Japanese response to the 100 Regiments Campaign showed that the rape of Nanjing had not been an isolated case of savagery. Under the 'Three All' slogan – 'Kill all, Burn all, Loot all' – Japanese forces launched a terror campaign against the population in the areas which had supported the Communist attacks. Murder, mutilation and rape were the order of the day. Whole villages were systematically destroyed.

Chinese collaboration with the Japanese

As Japan gained ground in China it sought to consolidate its military hold by enlisting Chinese leaders who were willing to cooperate in the setting up of nominally independent areas. In an effort to wreck the United Front, Japan, which saw the Communists as the major enemy, offered to recognise Jiang Jieshi as the national spokesman for China if he would abandon his alliance with the CCP. Jiang refused. While it is true that his ultimate objective was the defeat of the Communists, he was not willing to abandon his claim to the leadership of China by throwing in his lot with the Japanese.

However, there were lesser figures who did respond to the occupiers' approaches. One such was Wang Jingwei, a former colleague of Jiang (see page 77). Judging that China could not win the war, Wang agreed in 1940 to become the head of what the Japanese called 'the New Government of China'. From Nanjing, the captured former capital, Wang denounced Jiang and his Nationalist government as traitors to the true interests of China. Wang's rival government survived for four years until his death in 1944. But it was never able to match either the GMD at Chongqing or the CCP at Yanan as an expression of Chinese aspirations. Without the backing of the occupying forces, Wang's government was powerless.

International reaction to the Sino-Japanese War

The savagery of the Japanese in Nanjing and elsewhere appalled international opinion. Newsreels carried grim pictures of Japanese atrocities in China into cinemas worldwide. Indeed, Western perceptions of the horror of modern warfare were often drawn from the scenes of the Japanese bombing of Chinese civilians as depicted in these films. Yet this did not create any real determination on the part of the international community to become involved in the struggle. The League of Nations continued to criticise Japanese excesses, but its protests were little more than gestures. The Americans similarly condemned Japan for its illegality. Yet, although individual volunteers, such as General **Claire Chennault** and his team of 'flying tigers', fought for the Chinese, the USA as a nation was not yet ready to become directly engaged in the China struggle. It preferred at this stage to guard its Pacific interests against Japanese expansion by economic rather than military sanctions.

KEY FIGURE

Claire Chennault (1893–1958)

A Texan hero figure who built a team of fighter pilots and, independently of the US government, fought for Jiang Jieshi against the Japanese and the Communists.

Europe's response

Europe was no more willing than the USA to respond actively. France and Britain individually expressed anger at Japan's treatment of the Chinese, but, apart from taking extra precautions to safeguard their own interests in the region, they made no positive move to resist Japan. It is true that they recognised and paid verbal tributes to Jiang Jieshi as leader of the Chinese people in their resistance to the aggressor, but, right up to the time of Pearl Harbor (see page 116), Western commercial links with Japan were maintained. In the case of the Western oil companies, their volume of trade with Japan actually increased between 1937 and 1941 as they sought to cash in on Japan's growing need for fuel.

As for the **Axis powers**, Japan's humiliation of China earned their approval. As Fascist states, they looked upon Japan as an oriental version of themselves. Such convergence of feeling became formalised with the creation in 1936 of the **Anti-Comintern Pact**. Germany was naturally cautious in regard to Japanese expansion since it still hankered after its former territories in the Far East. But, on the broader political issues, Japan and Germany now had much in common. The result was that Germany was prepared to give Japan a free hand in its dealings with China.

The reluctance of the international powers to become involved meant that in the initial stages of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937–41, China stood alone. There was thus no restriction on the way Japan behaved. International tensions elsewhere meant that Japan's full-scale attack on the Chinese mainland between 1937 and 1941 met no significant foreign opposition. Consequently, Japan was able to overrun large parts of the central and southern coastline of China, and make major incursions inland. By 1940, Japan had sent over 750,000 ground troops to China. This was a huge drain on men and **materiel**. But once Japan had made the commitment, it could not easily detach itself unless it achieved complete victory. That it did not achieve that victory was ultimately due to the entry of the USA into the war in China.

KEY TERMS

Axis powers Hitler's Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Fascist Italy, which fought against the Western Allies (France, Britain, the USSR and the USA) in the Second World War.

Anti-Comintern Pact An agreement in 1936 between Germany, Italy and Japan, declaring their joint hostility to the Soviet Union.

Materiel Military resources.

Washington Conference A meeting of the major maritime nations at which they agreed to limit their warship building.

Role of the USA in China 1939–41

US foreign policy during the 1930s was one of neutrality. The USA did not wish to become embroiled in foreign issues. The major exception to that was its attitude to Japan, with which it developed a mutual antipathy.

Reasons for American–Japanese hostility

The following factors help to explain the growing tension between Japan and the USA:

- Naval rivalry: Japan resented the restrictions on its naval expansion laid down at the 1922 **Washington Conference**, for which it blamed the USA.
- The great powers were competing over the control of the Pacific.

- Growing Japanese militarism alarmed the US government.
- Japan was embittered by the USA's immigration laws, which treated the Japanese as inferiors.
- The Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936 aroused American fears that with Germany as an ally, Japan would feel free to increase its expansionist aims in Asia and the Pacific rim.
- Japan was aware of its economic vulnerability and dependence on the USA, with nearly two-thirds of Japan's imports, mainly oil, cotton and iron, coming from America. Most significant of all, by the late 1930s Japan received 90 per cent of its oil supplies from the USA.
- Japan in 1939 calculated that it now had sufficient economic reserves for only two years ahead and only one year in the event of war.

Despite these underlying tensions, the USA for much of the 1930s clung to a set of basic principles which it held should govern international relations and which accorded with its maintenance of neutrality. These included:

- respect for territorial integrity
- non-intervention
- equal economic opportunity
- maintenance of the *status quo* in the Pacific.

However, by the late 1930s, Japan's brutal occupation of China and its growing ambitions towards south-east Asia suggested to many in the US administration that these principles were no longer realistic and that conflict with Japan might be unavoidable.

Immediate steps leading to US involvement in China 1939–41

There followed a series of developments which changed the character of the Sino-Japanese War:

- 1939: the USA cancelled existing US–Japanese trade agreements.
- July 1940: Japan began the construction of airfields in northern Indo-China, bringing much of south-east Asia within bombing range. The USA immediately reacted by pointedly granting a large loan to China. In the same month, the USA introduced an Export Control Act, restricting the sale of arms and supplies to Japan. In the following months, similar restrictions were placed on the export of aviation oil to Japan.
- September 1940: Japan entered into a Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, committing each party to retaliate militarily against any country which attacked any one of them.
- April 1941: the USSR and Japan signed a Non-Aggression Pact which left Japan confident that it was safe from northern attacks.
- July 1941: Japan claimed authority over the whole of Indo-China. The USA responded by immediately freezing Japanese assets in the USA.
- September 1941: an American embargo was imposed on oil exports to Japan.

- March to November 1941: talks between the Fumimaro Konoe and Cordell Hull, the respective Japanese and American foreign ministers, were personally friendly, but did not narrow the gap between the two governments.
- September 1941: the Tokyo government approved plans for an aerial attack on Pearl Harbor.
- 26 November 1941: the USA demanded unavailingly that Japan withdraw all its forces from occupied China. On the same day, the Japanese attack force set sail for Pearl Harbor.

3 The Sino-Japanese War 1941–5

▶ *What was the significance of the USA's entry into the war in 1941?*

On 7 December 1941, Japanese air forces launched 'Operation Tora Tora' ('Tiger, Tiger'), an unannounced attack on the US Pacific fleet moored at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Japan claimed to have been provoked into this action by the USA's attempt earlier in 1941 to impose a total embargo on oil supplies to Japan, a ban intended to destroy the Japanese economy.

Pearl Harbor proved a fateful move. In a prolonged war, Japan's chances of defeating the USA, the world's most powerful economic and military state, would continually diminish. But at the time of Pearl Harbor, Japanese thinking ran along the following lines:

- A quick, disabling, strike on the US Pacific forces would oblige the American government to make an immediate peace on Japanese terms.
- Japan had no territorial designs on the American mainland; its essential aim was to drive America out of the Pacific, leaving Japan free to reach its natural extension as an Asiatic power.

The gamble failed because the Japanese had not allowed for the outrage with which the USA reacted to the attack. President Roosevelt's bitter condemnation of 'this day of infamy' expressed the passionate conviction with which the Americans entered what they characterised as a crusade against Japanese barbarism. In declaring war, the USA resolved on the total defeat of Japan.

For eighteen months after Pearl Harbor, Japan, driven by the need to increase its oil supplies, took territories as far south as the Philippines and as far west as Burma, but this very expansion meant that it had overstretched itself. Should the war prove a protracted one, the strain on Japanese resources would become unbearable. It is true that Japan fought for four years, 1941–5, with extraordinary fervour. But, even before the atomic bombing of the Japanese mainland in August 1945 brought Japanese resistance to an end (see page 119), it was already clear that Japan would not achieve its original objectives.

The significance of Pearl Harbor for China

The importance for China of Japan's attack on the USA in 1941 was profound. What had been an essentially Sino-Japanese conflict now became a vital theatre of the much larger world war. From that time on:

- China was seen by the USA as a chief means of defeating Japan. It was supplied with vast resources in an effort to turn it into a base of operations.
- By 1945, the USA had invested over $1 billion in China.
- America's entry gave a great political, as well as military, boost to Jiang Jieshi as Chinese leader.

Jiang and the Americans

Jiang Jieshi declared 8 December 1941 to be the happiest day of his life. It is easy to see why. The Americans, anxious to use China principally as a means of defeating Japan, turned naturally to Jiang. As the leader of China, acknowledged as such even by the CCP under the Xian agreement (see page 105), he was the obvious person with whom to liaise. All Jiang's public pronouncements were intended to convince the Western Allies that he was not merely to be trusted but that he was, indeed, the only real hope of a successful unifying of the Chinese war effort against Japan. President Roosevelt came to regard Jiang Jieshi as being as important a world figure in wartime as Churchill or Stalin.

Chinese Communists and the Americans

Arguably, the USA grasped the importance and strength of the Chinese Communists only after it was too late. In their desperation to defeat Japan, the Americans accepted Jiang Jieshi and the GMD as the real force in China and, therefore, deserving of their full support. Yet it had not been out of the question for the Chinese Communists to have reached an accommodation with the Americans. Their interests in China often coincided, the most obvious example being their joint determination to defeat Japan. Moreover, at that stage their ideological differences were not an insurmountable hurdle. During the Japanese occupation, the CCP deliberately played down its political aims; it dropped its call for a class war and emphasised that it was engaged in a national struggle against the Japanese aggressor. Mao asked the Americans to understand that his party were 'agrarian reformers' rather than violent revolutionaries. Furthermore, the war in Europe, which witnessed a four-year military alliance between Communist USSR and capitalist USA, was clear evidence that ideologies need not be a barrier to cooperation.

Jiang Jieshi's strategy after 1941

Despite the influx after 1941 of American money and supplies, Jiang and the GMD remained reluctant to face the Japanese head on. There were few pitched battles between Chinese and Japanese forces. To avoid being overwhelmed by the superior Japanese armies, the Chinese necessarily fought a guerrilla war.

This did not prevent the cities and urban areas suffering severely from Japanese air strikes. It was in the GMD-held areas in central and southern China that the Japanese found the easiest targets to bomb. Chongqing, for example, suffered prolonged periods of aerial attack that made it the most heavily bombed city in twentieth-century warfare.

From 1941 onwards, Jiang Jieshi calculated that American support, which would culminate in the landing of US forces in China, would hand him eventual victory over both Japan and the CCP. Nevertheless, in spite of his belief in eventual triumph, he proved a difficult ally. He frequently quarrelled with the American advisers and demanded that those he disagreed with be replaced. Not wishing to weaken the war effort, the USA tended to do as he asked, despite the charge made by many American observers that Jiang's preoccupation with crushing the Reds was a principal cause of China's poor showing against the Japanese. This was the essential complaint of General **Joseph Stilwell**, the American chief of south-east Asia command and one of Jiang's sharpest critics. Stilwell observed that, compared to the CCP's struggle against Japan, the GMD's resistance was half-hearted and ineffective; invaluable American resources were being wasted on the Nationalists. In 1943, Stilwell jotted down his opinions in an awkward but expressive note form: 'I judge Guomindang and Communist Party by what I saw: GMD – corruption, neglect, chaos, economy, taxes: Communist program – to reduce taxes, rents, interest. Raise production and standard of living.'

KEY FIGURE

Joseph ('Vinegar Joe') Stilwell (1883–1946)

His dislike of Jiang Jieshi, whom he dismissed as 'the peanut', led him to exaggerate the role of the Chinese Communists in opposing the Japanese.

Anxious to avoid antagonising Jiang, the US State Department replaced Stilwell, but substance was given to his argument by the outcome of the Ichigo Offensive of April to December 1944, the largest of Japan's campaigns in China. The brilliantly executed campaign, a sweeping Japanese movement that brushed aside Jiang's forces, knocked out many Allied airfields and opened a Japanese land route to Indo-China, showed what a powerful military force Japan remained. The GMD armies were unable to stem the advance which carried Japanese forces deep into southern China.

The unpopularity of the Nationalists

It was not merely that the GMD was ineffective in military terms; it was evident that its armies too often lacked the will to fight. Jiang's critics did not find this surprising. The GMD's savage methods of recruitment and ferocious discipline were hardly calculated to inspire loyalty and enthusiasm among the troops. Reasonably competent when things were going well, the Nationalist forces too often broke when put under pressure. Their problems were compounded by their failure to win the wholehearted support of the Chinese people whose protector they supposedly were. Indeed, an outstanding feature of the war was the unpopularity of the GMD armies among the Chinese peasantry. This was a product of the abusive treatment the peasants invariably received at the hands of the Nationalist troops and of the GMD government's harsh conscription, taxation and expropriation policies (see page 124).

Effect of the sudden ending of the war in 1945

What eventually saved the GMD forces was not the quality of their resistance but the curtailing of Japan's war effort in China as the Japanese mainland fell under increased Allied attack from 1944 onwards. The climax of the aerial onslaught came with the atomic bombing of Japan by the USA in August 1945. Within a few days of the unleashing of this awesome new power against them, the Japanese surrendered. The abrupt end to the Pacific war dramatically changed the position in China.

The surrender of Japan in August 1945, directly following the nuclear devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was in one obvious sense a great Chinese victory. Japan had finally been defeated after fifteen years of struggle. But it had not come the way that Jiang Jieshi had expected. His belief throughout had been that the fanatical Japanese resistance would eventually lead to two critical developments:

- The landing in China of huge US armies, which would roll up the Japanese in a large land operation.
- In the course of this the Americans would overwhelm not only the Japanese but the Chinese Communists as well. This would leave Jiang both the victor over Japan and the master of China.

But events betrayed him. When the war abruptly ended in August 1945, the location of the Japanese and their Communist resisters meant that it was invariably the Reds to whom the Japanese formally submitted. The events of 1945 had thus destroyed Jiang Jieshi's dream. He did not have the expected US troops at his disposal in China, which prevented him from crushing the Communists as he had planned. A further limitation on Jiang's claim to mastery of China was that Soviet armies had now occupied Manchuria, the USSR having declared war on Japan the day after the Nagasaki bombing.

The problem created by the Japanese surrender

The Communists resisted the GMD's claim to the nineteen liberated areas, which during the years of anti-Japanese struggle had become Communist-administered zones. They also pressed their right to receive the formal submission of the Japanese forces. **Zhu De** and Mao Zedong ordered their troops to occupy the former Japanese-held regions and hold the Japanese as prisoners. Jiang's government at Chongqing, however, insisted that the Japanese should surrender only to accredited representatives of the Nationalists. But the problem for the GMD was that they could not enforce this demand; they had no troops in the Communist-dominated areas. Jiang, therefore, instructed the Japanese to continue to maintain order and discipline in their areas until Nationalist forces arrived. The same orders were sent to the 'autonomous regions' which the Japanese had formerly set up (see page 105).

KEY FIGURE

Zhu De (1886–1976)

A Long March veteran, he was one of the PLA's ablest commanders and remained a prominent political figure in the PRC until his death in the same year as Mao's.

The Nationalists would have been unable to enforce this had the USA not stepped in. Anxious to prevent the Soviet army in Manchuria from extending its control southwards, the Americans mounted a huge airlift of NRA forces to the liberated areas. General MacArthur, the Allied commander-in-chief in the Far East, declared that only Jiang Jieshi had the authority to receive Japan's surrender in China. The question now was whether the Communists would accept this. Although Mao regarded Jiang and the GMD as 'fascists', he announced that he was willing to make the necessary concession. Mao explained why to his followers: 'Without these concessions, we will not be able to shatter the GMD's plot for civil war, nor take the political initiative, nor gain the sympathy of the rest of the world, nor gain legal status for our party.'

Mao knew that the recent Soviet–GMD Friendship Treaty (14 August 1945) which he had acknowledged and accepted meant that he was unlikely to receive support from the USSR should he openly challenge Jiang's US-backed claims over the surrender issue. The treaty under which Jiang had agreed to allow Soviet forces into Manchuria in return for the USSR's recognition of his party as the only legitimate government of China, had declared that its terms ended 'all outstanding grievances' between China and the USSR. A British newspaper, *The Observer*, commented on the significance of the Soviet Union's abandoning of the Chinese Communists: 'The cynic may be inclined to regard Russia's part in the conclusion of the treaty with China as a sacrifice of the Yanan regime for the sake of greater prestige and influence in Chungking and hence over all China.'

Subsequent events confirmed the accuracy of *The Observer*'s assessment. It can now be appreciated that the Friendship Treaty was tied in with the Soviet Union's declaration of war on Japan in August 1945 in the last days of the conflict in China. The USSR was manoeuvring itself into a position from which it could seize Chinese territory. Soviet armies entered occupied Manchuria in August 1945 and did not withdraw until May 1946, after they had stripped the region of its economic resources.

Despite Soviet interference, it soon become clear that the net result of the Sino-Japanese War had been to leave the Communists in a position of strength in China from which, within five years, they were able to take control of the whole of China. The Japanese war had served as the great catalyst in Chinese politics.

Final breakdown of the GMD–CCP alliance

Even before the defeat of Japan, the Americans hoped that the two rival parties in China could be brought together into some form of power sharing. Patrick Hurley, the US ambassador, sponsored a number of meetings between the CCP and the GMD. Intermittent talks between the two parties were held in 1944–5. Mao declared himself willing to consider a compromise. However, in March 1945, Jiang broke off negotiations, announcing that he had no intention of sharing power with the Communists.

Again through American auspices, further talks were held in Chongqing in August 1945, following the Japanese surrender. Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi met face to face for the first time in twenty years. They even drank toasts to each other. But this was for show; the truth was they were preparing for civil war. President Truman, however, still believed that a compromise could be achieved. He sent the USA's most distinguished soldier and diplomat, General **George Marshall**, to try to broker a lasting agreement.

KEY FIGURE

George Marshall (1880–1959)

US Army chief of staff during the Second World War and Roosevelt's chief military adviser.

Marshall spent some months attempting to resurrect the GMD–CCP talks but by March 1946 he had to admit that a compromise settlement was impossible. There were two complementary fears that prevented agreement between Jiang and Mao:

- the GMD's concern that the Communists, while willing publicly to recognise Jiang Jieshi as the leader of China, were not willing to cooperate in practice and were planning to overthrow him
- the Communists' profound doubt, based on past experience, that the Nationalist regime would honour its promise to allow them to retain the liberated areas that they now held. It was their fear over this that led the Communists to walk out of the talks.

Put simply, neither side trusted the other. Even as they talked they were seizing territory and preparing for the conflict they knew was coming. Initial skirmishes had already occurred before the Civil War broke out in earnest in June 1946. It was to last for four years.

4 The Communist takeover 1945–9

▶ *Why were the Communists able to take over mainland China in 1949?*

The Civil War 1946–9

The Chinese Civil War dates from June 1946, when the always rickety GMD–CCP truce finally broke down and Jiang Jieshi began a major campaign to recover Manchuria, many parts of which were controlled by the Communists. At the beginning all the advantages seemed to lie with Jiang and the Nationalists. A particular advantage was the support of the USA. Even after it had withdrawn its diplomatic mission from China, the USA continued formally to back the GMD. It was a policy that went against the advice of many of its experts on the spot. One reason for this apparent disregard of political realities was that by 1946 the USA had already committed huge resources to shoring up the GMD:

- Under a **lend–lease** scheme it had issued millions of dollars worth of military equipment to the Nationalists.

KEY TERM

Lend–lease Provision of goods and supplies at no charge or at very low rates of interest.

- It had provided transport to carry over 500,000 GMD troops to the zones surrendered by the Japanese, an operation described by General Wedemeyer as 'the greatest air and sea transportation in history'.
- 55,000 US marines had been sent to the northern ports as 'military advisers' to the GMD.

The USA judged that, having outlaid so much, it was impossible for it to make a major shift in its Far-Eastern policy. The result was that it continued to finance and support Jiang and the Nationalists, regardless of the fact that the GMD had long since forfeited the support of the majority of the Chinese people.

KEY TERM

PLA The People's Liberation Army, formerly the CCP's Red Army.

The Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi entered the Civil War with greatly superior troop numbers and greater materiel and resources than the Communists. The 5 million troops of the NRA outnumbered those of the **PLA** by over four to one. On that score alone, Jiang ought to have won the war, but it was largely his mistakes and the poor showing of the GMD militarily, politically and economically that gave eventual victory to his opponents. The Nationalists threw away their initial advantages.

The character of the Civil War

The Civil War was often a complicated affair in its details. This was because the struggle between Nationalists and Communists frequently became confused with local feuds and rivalries. For most peasants, their loyalties were to their locality and they viewed the NRA and PLA armies as being no different from the marauding gangs who had customarily made their lives a misery. It is true that in some areas, Mao won a major propaganda coup by encouraging his troops to conduct themselves as friends of the peasants (see page 86), but this policy was not applied universally; where the PLA met stubborn resistance from villages they could be as ruthless as the Nationalists in suppressing it. In a number of regions, groups of villages, which had banded together in resistance to the Japanese, maintained their local militia after 1945, ready to fight any intruders, be they the NRA or the PLA. If it increased their security, these local associations were prepared to negotiate cooperative deals with the bandit gangs, remnants of the warlord armies, which still prowled the countryside.

Jiang's methods

After some seemingly impressive successes in the first year of the war, the Nationalists were unable to achieve a single major victory between 1947 and 1949. Faced by growing desertions, and betrayed by some of his higher officers, who passed to the Communists details of Nationalist troop positions and movements, Jiang could never wholly rely on his supposed supporters, a problem that rarely troubled Mao Zedong. Unable to sustain a genuinely popular following, Jiang increasingly resorted to coercion as the war went on. Property was seized, money expropriated and enlistment enforced. Protesters were arrested in large numbers and summary executions became commonplace.

In August 1948, Shanghai witnessed particularly bloody scenes, including street-corner beheadings and shootings by government troops. Such atrocities alienated the Nationalists' diminishing band of supporters and dismayed their foreign sympathisers, most significantly the Americans. Splits occurred in the GMD ranks; rival factions opposed to Jiang, such as the **Guomindang Revolutionary Alliance** and the **Democratic League**, came into being. Against this background it became progressively more difficult for Jiang's Nationalists to sustain their war effort.

KEY TERMS

Guomindang Revolutionary Alliance and the **Democratic League** Formed from breakaway Nationalists who despaired of Jiang's leadership and policies. They wanted a compromise settlement with the CCP.

SOURCE C



Shanghai witnessed a reign of terror before it fell. It was a common sight for suspected Communist sympathisers to be executed in the street by being shot in the back of the head. Before they left the city, the GMD government and party officials transferred millions of dollars worth of gold and silver bullion to Taiwan.

Why did the impending Nationalist defeat lead to scenes such as those shown in Source C? ?

After the surrender of Beijing to the Communists in January 1949, the last year of the war was a bitter affair with atrocities being committed by both sides, but nothing could long delay the seemingly inexorable Communist progress. The PLA crossed the Yangzi in April 1949 and by the end of the year had taken Nanjing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. On 1 October 1949, at the entrance to the Forbidden City in Beijing, Mao Zedong declared the creation of the Communist People's Republic of China. In December 1949, Jiang Jieshi left the mainland for the last time and flew to join the remnants of his forces on the island of Taiwan. There he established a Nationalist stronghold which continued to claim to be the legitimate government of the whole of China.

Mao's triumph

On 31 January 1950, a huge triumphal procession was held to mark the official CCP takeover. Mao made his entry in an open jeep, looking around at the great city that he had inherited and would remain master of until his death in 1976. An American observer of the scene said that the parade, which took an hour to pass, consisted of: 'tanks, armoured cars, truckloads of soldiers, trucks mounted with machine guns, trucks towing heavy artillery, innumerable ambulances, jeeps, and other smaller vehicles'. He recorded that what astounded him most was his realisation that it was 'primarily a display of *American* military equipment, virtually all of it captured or obtained from Guomindang sources'.

The Civil War's death toll

In terms of lives lost, the Civil War was one of the costliest struggles of the twentieth century:

- The Nationalists lost approximately 3 million men.
- The Communists lost 1 million men.
- When civilian deaths from famine and disruption are included, the total number of deaths was over 6 million.

Reasons for the Nationalists defeat: GMD weaknesses

A constant difficulty for Jiang was the personal rivalry among his generals, most of whom put their own interests before those of the NRA. Jiang also inadvertently made things worse by appointing commanders according to their personal loyalty to him rather than their military skills. Wars are, of course, ultimately decided on the battlefield. But political and economic factors are also profoundly important.

- By 1949, the GMD had had twenty years in government but those decades had been distinguished by administrative inefficiency and self-seeking.
- The Communists were able to portray themselves as essentially different; their initial willingness to cooperate with the GMD, despite the latter's murderous attitude towards them, suggested a high degree of selflessness.
- A policy that proved especially damaging to the Nationalists was their practice of enforced conscription. Increasingly desperate for manpower, but unable to raise enough volunteers to replenish its armies, Jiang's government authorised the rounding up of peasants by vicious armed recruitment squads. Once enlisted, the troops were treated with brutal contempt by their officers. The president of the Chinese Red Cross was appalled by the barbarity suffered by the Nationalist conscripts, describing how they were abused, beaten and starved.
- It is arguable that the single most powerful reason for the failure of the GMD government was inflation. In 1941, the chronic but relatively mild rise in prices which China had experienced throughout the republican period began

to climb uncontrollably. Galloping inflation reached astronomical heights after 1945, effectively destroying China's monetary system and undermining any claim Jiang's Nationalist government had to economic competence (see page 94).

Reasons for the Communist victory in 1949: CCP strengths

The Communists' overthrow of the GMD in 1949 was a great military success, but it was also a triumph in terms of politics, propaganda and public relations. Later accounts written by his supporters described Mao as having followed a carefully planned path to victory. They suggested that Mao, disregarding the half-hearted support of the Soviet Union and the meddling of the USA, had confidently followed his own judgement. By enlightened policies in the countryside he had formed an unbreakable bond with the Chinese people and led them in a great social revolution against Jiang and the GMD.

This narrative became the official CCP version of what had happened. However, what modern historians suggest is that the critical factor in Mao's success was not his long-term planning but his opportunism. When the Civil War was renewed in 1946, Mao's most optimistic hope was that the CCP would be able to retain the bases it had acquired by the end of the Japanese struggle. He did not foresee that within three years his Communist forces would have taken the whole of China. It was the Nationalists who made that possible by throwing away their initial superiority.

Mao's leadership

What is beyond dispute in the Communist legend is that, without Mao Zedong's power and ability as a leader, the CCP would not have won the war. His belief in his own correctness inspired the PLA's commanders and men. Mao possessed the strength of will that wins political and military struggles. It had expressed itself in the ruthlessness with which he had suppressed opposition within his own party in the rectification programme of the early 1940s (see page 87). Indeed, it was his domination of the party that enabled him to have the final word in the organising of the PLA's campaigns during the Civil War, allowing him to overcome the doubts of many of his commanders.

In the list of military factors accounting for the CCP's ultimate victory, Mao's leadership ranks as one of the most significant. It was under him that the PLA, which had been a rural guerrilla force in 1945, had, by 1948, become a modern army capable of conducting a modern war. The most impressive illustration of this was Mao's decision to undertake three gigantic campaigns fought between 1948 and 1949. Overcoming the reservations of those of his commanders who doubted that warfare could be sustained on such a scale, Mao drove his armies on to a set of victories that assured the ultimate triumph of the Communists in the Civil War.

Mao and the Soviet Union

There is a sense in which Mao's victory in the Civil War also marked a victory over the Soviet Union. Since the 1920s, Stalin had refused to believe that the Chinese Communists could achieve a genuine revolution. He held that they were too few in number to be significant and that the best thing for them was to merge with the Nationalists.

The upshot of this was that, when the Japanese grip on China was broken and the GMD–CCP Civil War was resumed, the Soviet Union remained a largely impotent onlooker. It made occasional gestures of goodwill towards Mao Zedong, and the Kremlin continued to send its representatives to CCP gatherings, but, even when the Red Army began to drive the Nationalists from their bases, Stalin could not bring himself to change tack. As late as 1949, the year in which the Reds forced the GMD off the Chinese mainland, the USSR persisted in recognising Jiang Jieshi as China's leader. Stalin believed throughout this period that the USA would not tolerate a Communist victory in China. Anxious not to provoke further American intervention in the Far East, he urged Mao to come to terms with the Nationalists, even if this meant accepting a China divided between the Reds in the north and the GMD in the south. Mao later recorded (Source D):

SOURCE D

Mao speaking in 1957, as reported in the *People's Daily*, 2 January 1979, quoted in Harrison Salisbury, *The New Emperors Mao and Deng: A Dual Biography*, HarperCollins, 1992, p. 15.

Even in 1949 when we were about to cross the Yangzi River, someone [Stalin] still wanted to prevent us. According to him we should under no circumstances cross the Yangzi. If we did so America would send troops to China and become directly involved in China's Civil War and the ***South and North dynasties*** *would reappear in China.*

I did not listen to what [Stalin] said. We crossed the Yangzi, America did not send troops and there were no South and North dynasties.

? In Source D, on what grounds does Mao ridicule Stalin?

KEY TERM

South and North dynasties A reference to the partition of China during the civil wars of the fifth and sixth centuries AD.

That both the USA and the Soviet Union continued to support the GMD until almost the last moment vindicated Mao Zedong's long-held belief that salvation for China was possible only from within China itself. Mao read the unfolding of events as a justification for the independent Marxist line that he had taken since the mid-1920s. By 1949, he was more than ever convinced that, for China, the Chinese way was the only way. Given the different national, cultural and ideological standpoints from which they started, there had never been a real likelihood that Mao Zedong and Stalin would come to share a common purpose and vision. Mao's success in 1949 owed nothing to Stalin and the Soviet Union. Indeed, had Mao heeded Stalin's advice there would have been no Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War.

Chapter summary

In 1931, Japan, in an effort to gain desperately needed resources, moved into China and occupied Manchuria. Using this area as a base, Japan spread out over much of northern China, until in 1937 it was in a position to turn its occupation into a full-scale war against the Chinese. The Japanese armies became notorious for the brutality with which they treated the Chinese, the rape of Nanjing in 1937 being a particularly fearful example. Despite the United Front being formed between Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists and Mao's Communists, divisions between the two weakened China's response. By 1941, Japan was in control of much of China. Until that date no foreign power had intervened in the conflict. However, increasing hostility between Japan and the USA culminated in a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

This opened a new theatre of conflict in the Second World War and made China and the USA allies in the anti-Japanese struggle. The atomic bombing of Japan in 1945 brought the war to a sudden conclusion, an outcome that seemingly left Jiang Jieshi triumphant over both the Japanese and his internal Communist enemies. However, by 1949, the GMD had been forced out of mainland China, leaving Mao free to construct a new Communist state, the PRC.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. What place did China have in Japan's expansionist schemes?
2. On what pretext did Japan occupy Manchuria in 1931?
3. What effect did the Xian Incident have on Chinese resistance to the occupation?
4. How sincere were the Japanese occupiers in urging the Chinese to cooperate with them?
5. What did the behaviour of the Japanese in Nanjing reveal about their attitude towards the Chinese?
6. Why were some Chinese willing to cooperate with the Japanese occupiers?
7. What was the significance of the 100 Regiments Campaign, 1940?
8. Why did the USA not join the war in China until 1941?
9. How did the attack on Pearl Harbor change the character of the Sino-Japanese War?
10. How did Jiang's expectations change after December 1941?
11. Why did Jiang's Nationalists decline in popularity during the war?
12. What impact did the sudden ending of the Pacific war have on the internal situation in China?
13. What effect did the Japanese occupation 1931–47 have on China's internal politics?
14. Why did the Communists win the Civil War of 1946–9?

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1 How far do you agree that the Chinese resistance to the Japanese occupation between 1931 and 1941 was half-hearted and ineffectual?

2 'The Japanese were not looking for cooperation with the Chinese, only domination over them.' How far do you agree with this statement about the policies followed by Japan during its occupation of China in the years 1931–41?

SOURCE ANALYSIS QUESTION

1 Assess the value of Source B (see page 111) as an illustration of the suffering of the victims of the Nanjing atrocities and of the impact of the Japanese occupation on China. Explain your answer, using the source, the information given about its origin and your own knowledge about the historical context.

CHAPTER 6

China and the wider world 1949–76

The dramatic internal changes in Mao's China, 1949–76, were matched by equally significant developments in the foreign policies of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Having secured what it regarded at its rightful territorial possessions within China, the PRC became caught up in a long-running conflict with both its ideological enemy, the USA, and its supposed ideological partner, the Soviet Union. The problems and crises that followed are the subject of this chapter, which explores the following themes:

- ★ The PRC's international position and regional issues
- ★ The PRC's relations with the USA
- ★ The PRC's relations with the Soviet Union
- ★ The impact of the Cultural Revolution on external affairs

Key dates

1949	PRC established
1950	Sino-Soviet Treaty
1950–3	Korean War
1953	Death of Stalin
1956	Beginning of de-Stalinisation
1957	Mao attended Moscow Conference
1958	Khrushchev met Mao in Beijing
1959	Soviet advisers withdrawn from PRC
1962	Sino-Indian War
1962	Cuban Missile Crisis
1963	Mao attacked Soviet policy of detente
1964	Khrushchev dismissed in USSR
	PRC detonates its first atomic bomb
1966–7	Cultural Revolution: Maoist attacks on foreigners
1968	Mao opposed Brezhnev doctrine
1969	Lowest point in Sino-Soviet relations
1971	PRC replaced Taiwan in United Nations
1972	Nixon's visit to China
1976	Death of Mao

1 The PRC's international position and regional issues

▶ *What issues in regional and foreign affairs did Mao face after the formation of the PRC?*

The PRC and the West

There is a sense in which hostility between China and the West was a natural development. After all, they represented opposite ends of the political spectrum: the West, led, if not dominated, by the USA with its capitalist system was a natural enemy of the People's Republic of China, which was ideologically committed to the destruction of capitalism. Mao's experience and political instinct led him consistently to distrust the West and to back all revolutionary movements anywhere in the world, which was why from the earliest days of the PRC its agents were to be found in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

After 1945, the governments of Europe and North America, disturbed by the Soviet Union's takeover of Eastern Europe, shared a common fear of international communism which drew them together under the umbrella of US protection. In 1947, President Truman pledged the USA 'to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure'. Although this 'Truman doctrine' did not specifically mention communism, it was clear that Truman intended it as a warning to the USSR, a likely aggressor. Western fears were given formal shape in 1949 with the formation of the **NATO** alliance. The year 1949 also proved a particularly significant time in the hardening of the **Cold War** since it was then that the Soviet Union detonated its own nuclear device and China became Communist. These two developments convinced the West, mistakenly as it proved, that the USSR and the PRC were now united as a Communist monolith stretching across two continents (see page 132). Thereafter, all the moves made by the PRC, beginning with Mao's **'reunification' campaigns**, were judged in the light of the supposed expansionist threat that it posed as a Communist power.

KEY TERMS

NATO The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, formed in 1949 by Britain, France, the Benelux countries and the USA as a safeguard against Soviet expansion into Western Europe.

Cold War The period of tension (1945–91) between the Communist Eastern bloc, led by the USSR, and the Western democratic nations, led by the USA.

'Reunification' campaigns The Chinese government's term for its crushing of regional resistance within the PRC.

Mao's 'reunification' campaigns

Mao's determination not to allow the Communist victory in 1949 to become an opportunity for the regions to assert their independence was very evident in the way he enforced PRC control over China's outlying areas. In a series of 'reunification' campaigns, three separate PLA forces were despatched to impose control on Tibet, Xinjiang and Guangdong. Although Mao regarded these actions as internal matters, the rigour with which they were carried out confirmed in many Western eyes that the PRC was an aggressive regime whose expansionism matched that of its Marxist ally, the USSR. From its beginning, therefore, Mao's China was very much part of the Cold War:

- *Tibet*: a PLA force was sent into Tibet in October 1950. The stated justification for the invasion was that the region had historically always belonged to China. However, the Tibetans were markedly different in race, culture and religion from the Chinese and had always regarded themselves as a separate people. This was evident from the spirited resistance the PLA met with when it invaded; a hastily assembled force of 60,000 Tibetans fought determinedly to preserve their land and culture. However, without a trained army and possessing only outdated weapons, the Tibetans had no chance of matching the occupying PLA. Within six months, open resistance had been suppressed. The PLA then imposed a regime of terror aimed at wiping out all traces of separate Tibetan identity, a process that was to drag on over many years (see page 176).
- *Xinjiang and Guangdong*: similar PLA harshness was shown in Xinjiang. This distant western province, which bordered Soviet-controlled Outer Mongolia, had a large Muslim population. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) feared that it would either declare its independence of China or fall into Soviet hands. By 1951, within a year of their arrival, PLA detachments had imposed Communist authority over the region. At the same time, a third PLA army brought the Guangdong (Kwantung) province in southern China under PRC dominance.
- *Taiwan*: the attitude of Mao towards Taiwan, to which the Guomindang (GMD) had fled in 1949, was very simple: the island, he said, was now illegally occupied by the Nationalists; it was not a separate state but merely a breakaway province of mainland China. Mao's initial intention after taking power in 1949 was to extend the Civil War by immediately invading Taiwan and reclaiming it. He was deterred from doing so by the thought of the strength of US-backed Taiwanese resistance.

2 The PRC's relations with the USA

▶ *Why did the PRC and the USA regard each other with animosity?*

Reasons for tense Sino-American relations

For a generation after 1949, relations between the PRC and the USA were strained and bitter. From 1950, the PRC mounted a continuous verbal attack on 'American imperialism' which included the ritual daily chanting by China's schoolchildren of, 'Death to the American imperialists and all their running dogs'. The reasons for such animosity are not hard to locate.

The 'loss' of China

The USA's sensitivity over the 'loss' of China, its own term for the American failure to prevent Mao's victory in China in 1949, led the Americans to interpret

all subsequent Chinese Communist moves as essentially aggressive and anti-Western.

KEY TERMS

CIA Central Intelligence Agency, the USA's espionage and counter-espionage organisation.

McCarthyism A movement which took its name from Senator Joseph McCarthy, head of a Congressional Committee seeking to expose secret Communists supposedly working in the US administration. The Committee was responsible for creating a 'Red scare' for much of the 1950s.

Congress The United States' parliament.

CIA involvement in Tibet

There was evidence that **CIA** agents tried, albeit unavailingly, to assist the Tibetans in their 1950 rising against the PLA (see page 131). Although this activity was never on as large a scale as PRC propaganda claimed, it was enough for Mao to charge the American imperialists with interference in the affairs of the PRC as a sovereign state.

The Korean War 1950–3

Whatever the merits of the PRC's case for entering the Korean War (see page 139), the outcome was three years of struggle with the USA as the main enemy. The bitterness of the fighting and the high death toll on the Chinese side deepened Sino-American hostility to the point where Mao defined the American endeavour as a preliminary to an attack on the PRC itself.

Mao's fear of American intentions

Mao's fear of an American attack was not simple paranoia. As a Marxist, Mao held that at some point there would be a final great struggle between capitalists and proletarians. Given this premise, it was not entirely fanciful for Mao to think that the capitalist USA harboured destructive intentions towards the PRC.

Initially, the USA held that the USSR and China were acting as a joint Communist bloc, and it took some time for the reality of the deep Sino-Soviet fissure (see page 136) to be appreciated by the USA. In the meantime, American perception of a joint Sino-Soviet conspiracy created an atmosphere in which Chinese Communists were feared as much in the USA as American imperialists were in China. One product of this was **McCarthyism**, which played its part in creating a 'Red scare' in the USA and intensifying Sino-American animosity.

Taiwan and the USA's refusal to recognise the PRC

The major diplomatic issue over which Sino-American hostility arose was Taiwan. Despite the disillusion many US officials felt about their pro-Jiang, anti-Mao stance before 1949, the USA continued until 1971 to give diplomatic recognition and financial support to Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist Taiwan. This was not out of any great trust in Jiang but because Cold War divisions meant that the USA invariably backed anti-Communist regimes, no matter how undemocratic they might be. Mao saw this as proof of the inherent corruption of American capitalism.

In the USA, the hardening of the Cold War had produced a pro-Taiwan lobby in **Congress**, which argued strongly that Jiang's Nationalists were an Asian bastion against the spread of international communism and could not, therefore,

be deserted. This view prevailed and led to the American pretence that Jiang's island regime in Taiwan was the true China, entitled to its membership of the **United Nations (UN)** and its seat as a permanent member of the **UN Security Council**. For Mao, the American refusal to grant diplomatic recognition to mainland China and, instead, to maintain the fiction that the routed Nationalists, skulking on an offshore island, represented the Chinese nation was an insult to the PRC and its people. Mao condemned the USA's sponsorship of Taiwan as an act of folly that the USA and its capitalist lackeys would come to regret.

Mao Zedong maintained the right to send his forces to take Taiwan at any time, but, with the PRC's armies heavily involved in the Korean War (see page 139), he held back from carrying out the threat. Nevertheless, he continued through the 1950s to rattle the sabre over Taiwan, ordering troop movements and manoeuvres that seemed to presage invasion. He justified his combative stance by referring to hostile American actions which included the following:

- supplying the Nationalist regime with finance and weaponry
- persuading the UN to impose a trade embargo on the PRC
- using the US Seventh Fleet to patrol the straits between Taiwan and the Communist mainland
- signing the Mutual Security Pact in 1954 in which the USA pledged to support the GMD government and to defend Taiwan against attack from outside
- installing sophisticated weaponry on Taiwan, including nuclear missiles.

In 1958, Mao made his most belligerent move yet when he instructed PLA shore batteries to shell the Nationalist-held islands of Quemoy and Matsu. The strength of the shelling suggested that a Communist Chinese assault on Taiwan was imminent. US vessels were also threatened in the Taiwan Straits. The USA prepared for war. But no attack came from the mainland. Communist China was not in a position to invade Taiwan. Mao judged that his forces did not yet possess the necessary air power and landing craft to mount a successful invasion of the well-defended island.

The nuclear issue

Sino-American relations were further strained by the issue of nuclear weapons. This was understandable given that the USA was a nuclear power and that PRC would not develop its own atomic bomb until 1964 (see page 147). PRC propaganda made much of Mao's dismissal of the USA and its nuclear weapons as **'paper tigers'**. Whatever his private fears may have been, Mao had earlier shown his apparent disdain for the USA's nuclear capacity (Source A, overleaf).

KEY TERMS

United Nations (UN) The body that succeeded the League of Nations in 1945 as an organisation to maintain international peace.

UN Security Council A UN body set up to resolve international disputes, by force if necessary; its five permanent members were Britain, France, Nationalist China, the USSR and the USA.

'Paper tigers' A dismissive term Mao often applied to any people or nation whose power was more apparent than real.

? According to Mao in Source A, why is the PRC not fearful of the USA's atomic weapons?

SOURCE A

From an article by Mao Zedong, January 1955, in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, volume V, Peking Foreign Languages Press, 1977, p. 152.

Today, the danger of a world war and the threats to China come mainly from the warmongers in the United States. They have occupied our Taiwan and the Taiwan Straits and are contemplating an atomic war. We have two principles: first we don't want war; second we will strike back resolutely if anyone invades us. This is what we teach the members of the Communist Party and whole nation. The Chinese people are not to be cowed by U.S. blackmail. Our country has a population of 600 million and an area of 9,6000,000 square kilometres. The United States cannot annihilate the Chinese nation with its small stack of atom bombs. Even if the U.S. atom bombs were so powerful that, when dropped on China, they would make a hole right through the earth, or even blow it up, that would hardly mean anything to the universe as a whole.

*We have an expression, **millet plus rifles**. In the case of the United States, it is planes plus the A-bomb. However, if the United States with its planes plus the A-bomb is to launch a war of aggression against China, then China with its millet plus rifles is sure to emerge the victor.*

KEY TERMS

Millet plus rifles A term earlier used by Mao to explain why the PLA had defeated the Nationalists; he claimed that ordinary Chinese had supplied his forces with food to sustain them in their military struggle.

Superpower A nation that possesses advanced nuclear weaponry.

This may have been bravado; nevertheless, it was an attitude that Mao maintained until the PRC itself became a **superpower** in the 1960s.

Improved Sino-American relations in the 1970s

In spite of two decades of diplomatic hostility after 1949, Sino-American relations took an upward turn in the early 1970s. A leading factor was the USA's reversal of its position on Chinese representation in the UN; in 1971, it formally recognised mainland China's right to replace Taiwan in the UN (see page 151). This may have been motivated by the USA's reaction, part fear, part admiration, to the PRC's successful development of its own hydrogen bomb in 1967. Better to be on good rather than bad terms with China now that it was a full superpower. However, regardless of what prompted it, the American diplomatic concession over Taiwan encouraged the PRC to soften its approach to the USA. Talks between the two countries began in 1971. The initial diplomacy was conducted by Zhou Enlai and **Henry Kissinger**, whose negotiations prepared the way for the visit of President **Richard Nixon** to Beijing in February 1972.

KEY FIGURES

Henry Kissinger (1923–)
The US president's special adviser on foreign affairs.

Richard Nixon (1913–94)
US president 1969–74.

The very fact of Nixon's visit made it a momentous event. For the leader of the USA, 'the number one enemy nation', to be invited to China would have been unimaginable only a few years earlier. The ailing Mao, who was suffering from motor neurone disease, which caused loss of muscular control, was genuinely excited by the thought of meeting the president of the USA, arguably the most powerful man in the world. The two men took a liking to each other; their talks and those between their officials went well. Overall, the visit was certainly a major diplomatic success. A joint communiqué was issued in which the two nations expressed:

- the hope that there would be continuing Sino-American contacts
- their desire for commercial and cultural exchanges
- their joint agreement to give further consideration to ways in which the Taiwan issue could be resolved.

SOURCE B



Nixon and Mao shaking hands in Beijing in 1972.

Why might the photo in Source B be described as iconic?

Nixon's visit was more than merely symbolic. As their communiqué showed, both the PRC and the USA remained guarded in their approach. But the visit had indicated that, after the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution (see page 188), China was prepared, if not to lift the **'bamboo curtain'**, at least to part it.

Mao's undermining of the USSR

China's willingness to improve its relations with the USA had a deeper purpose than merely a desire to be on better terms with the West. The softening of China's previously hard line was part of its strategy to undermine the Soviet Union (see page 253). The Chinese resented the Soviet policies of **detente** and **coexistence**, which they interpreted as a tactic to leave China internationally isolated. The PRC decided to outplay the USSR at its own game by achieving a Sino-American detente. The Chinese were undoubtedly assisted in this by the more understanding approach of the Americans and by their mutual readiness to do down the Soviet Union. Sino-American relations continued to improve during Mao's remaining years and laid the basis for further commercial contact.

KEY TERMS

'Bamboo curtain' A figurative way of describing China's hostile attitude towards the non-Communist world, similar to the notion of the 'iron curtain' which divided Western and Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

Detente Easing of tensions between opposed powers.

Coexistence A willingness among nations with conflicting ideologies to let and let live; a corollary of detente.

3 The PRC's relations with the Soviet Union

Why did a fierce rivalry develop between the PRC and the USSR?

The expectation after the PRC was formed in 1949 was that, as a Communist state, it would naturally line up with the USSR against the West. Despite Stalin's earlier doubts about the ability of the CCP to survive (see page 126), the establishment of the PRC in 1949 was officially welcomed by the Soviet Union. Stalin calculated that China, as a newly formed Marxist state in a hostile capitalist world, would look to the USSR, the first great Communist nation, for guidance and protection. However, events were to show that Mao Zedong and China were far from regarding themselves as mere creatures of Stalin and the USSR.

While it was the case that, initially, the PRC 'leaned to one side', Mao's term for its alliance with the Soviet Union, things were never as simple as that. Mao and Stalin had a strained relationship. This went back before 1949 to the period of the Civil War, when it was apparent that Stalin had little faith in Mao's Communists and doubted they could achieve power. That was why he had given only partial help to the CCP, which he did not fully support until after it had defeated Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists. Stalin's disdain was something Mao never forgot and was one of the principal factors in the creation of Sino-Soviet tension.

Territorial disputes

At the end of the Pacific war in August 1945, Soviet forces occupied Manchuria for nine months and withdrew only after stripping the region of its industrial resources, thereby depriving China of over $2 billion worth of plant and machinery. Even after the formation of Mao's China in 1949, territorial disputes at various points along the Sino-Soviet border continued for decades to sour relations between the two countries.

Ideological differences

For Mao, Marxism provided a programme for achieving revolution in China, but it was vital that the Chinese revolutionaries interpret that programme in their own terms. His approach was essentially nationalistic; revolutionaries outside China could not dictate to the Chinese how they should conduct themselves (see page 82). Such a Sino-centric view of Marxism and revolution necessarily caused friction between Communist China and the Soviet Union, which regarded itself as the only true interpreter of Marxism–Leninism. Sino-Soviet relations after 1949 often descended into a battle over who represented true Marxism, the USSR or the PRC.

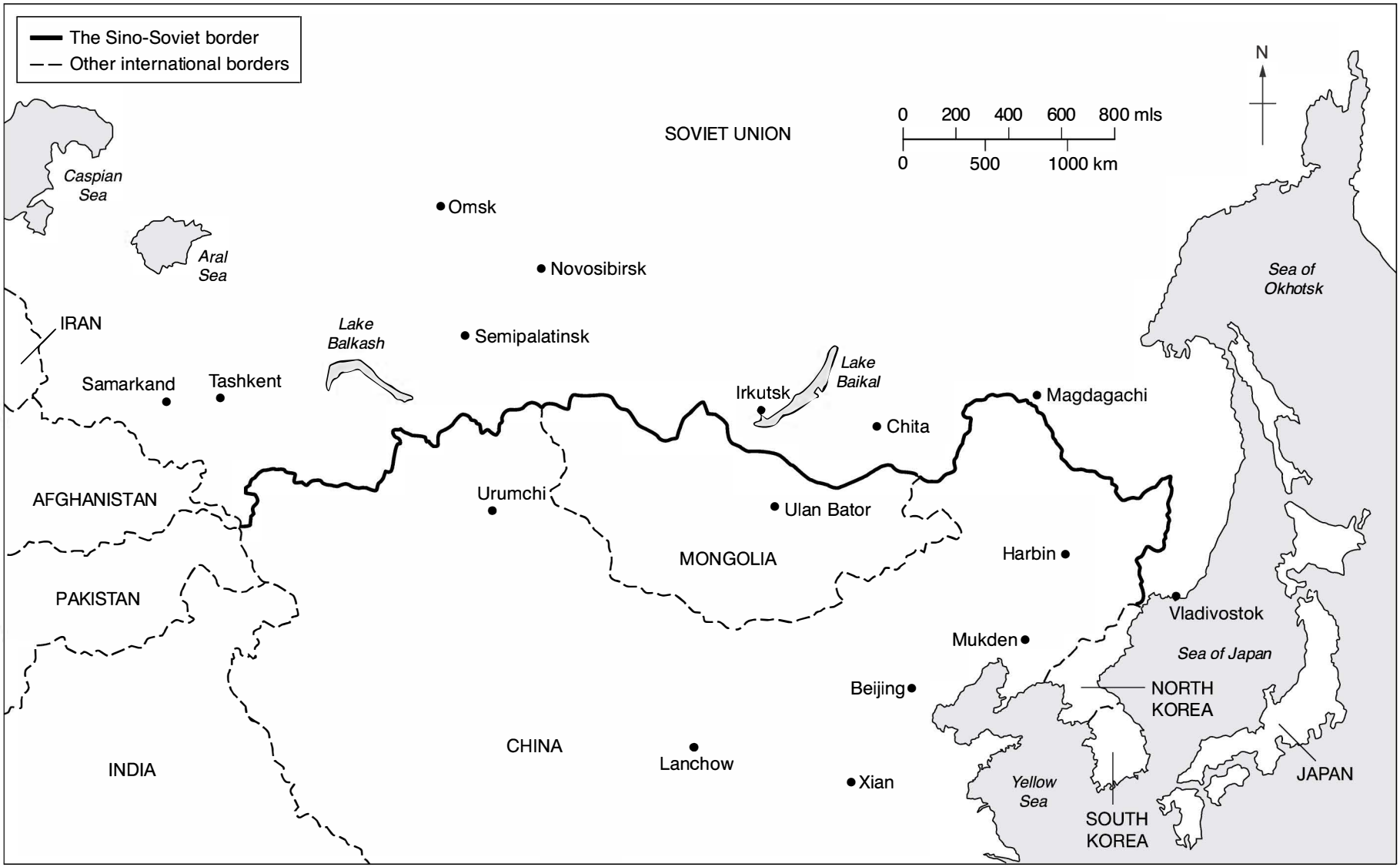


Figure 6.1 Map showing the Sino-Soviet border.

National rivalry

Mao judged that what the Soviet leader wanted was a disunited and divided China which would leave the USSR as the dominant force in Asia. This was why Mao found it hard to accept the USSR, despite its revolutionary pedigree, as the true voice of international Marxism. He came increasingly to believe that what motivated the Soviet Union was not communism but Russian self-interest. Nevertheless, in the early years of its existence, the PRC's economic needs meant that Mao could not afford to antagonise the USSR since that was the only country from whom he could draw economic support.

Mao and Stalin: a clash of personalities

It was to negotiate Soviet support that Mao paid an official visit to the USSR in 1950. His experience there confirmed his doubts concerning Stalin's attitude. Mao was offended by the superior air adopted by the Russians and by Stalin's dismissive treatment of the Chinese delegation. His hosts had made no arrangements to entertain him beyond the formal round of official meetings and banquets. Mao felt slighted. Biographers suggest that the two leaders disliked each other as people; their personalities conflicted because they were so similar in type. Once Mao had negotiated the treaty, which was the sole purpose of his visit, he left as quickly as possible.

The Sino-Soviet Treaty 1950

It soon became apparent that Mao's mistrust of Stalin was well founded. The Chinese realised soon after the treaty had been signed that the Soviet Union was intent on exploiting the agreement in its own favour. This was in spite of Mao's initial belief that the hard-won treaty had obliged the USSR to provide China with aid at low cost. Its wording, which spoke of 'friendship and equality' and 'economic and cultural co-operation', had appeared to promise much. But Stalin had struck a hard bargain. Under the terms of the treaty:

- The $300 million Soviet advance was a loan, not a gift; the PRC had to undertake to repay the full amount plus heavy interest.
- The upkeep of the 10,000 Soviet economic and military advisers who went to China had to be paid for fully by the Chinese.
- China had to give the bulk of its bullion reserves to the Soviet Union.

It was later admitted by **Nikita Khrushchev** that the treaty had been 'an insult to the Chinese people. For centuries the French, English and Americans had been exploiting China, and now the Soviet Union was moving in.'

Mao's realisation that China had been exploited put the barely formed Sino-Soviet partnership under great stress. The tension was felt as early as the Korean War, which began in 1950. Mao remarked that China had to pay 'down to the last bullet' for the Soviet arms it received during that conflict. There were also suggestions that Stalin deliberately prevented an early armistice being reached

KEY FIGURE

Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971)

Emerged from the power struggle that followed Stalin's death to become the Soviet leader between 1956 and 1964.

in Korea in order to exhaust the Chinese economically, making them still more dependent on the Soviet Union.

The PRC's initial dependence on the Soviet Union

Angered though he was by Soviet exploitation, Mao suffered it because he judged that for the time being there was no alternative. The new China could not survive without the USSR's economic assistance. The reality was that the PRC's isolation in a capitalist world left it unable to obtain adequate resources and expertise from anywhere else. Mao was resolved to gain economic independence, but until that was achieved (see page 166) he could not afford to break the link with the Soviet Union.

The Korean War 1950–3

The ambivalent character of Sino-Soviet relations was further evident in the Korean War. Geographically, the Korean peninsula hung like an appendix on mainland China; between 1910 and 1945 it had been occupied by the Japanese. With the defeat of Japan in 1945, Korea was partitioned along the 38th parallel, with the USA taking responsibility for protecting the area to the south of that line, while the Soviet Union did the same to the north. In 1950, the North Koreans crossed the parallel with the aim of imposing their Communist control over the whole peninsula.

The US State Department believed that the invasion had been initiated by Mao in collusion with Stalin. It assumed that the North Korean invasion of the South was the first joint venture of the new Sino-Soviet bloc. However, it is now known that, although Mao eventually backed North Korea, he had not prompted the invasion. Korea seems hardly to have been discussed at the meetings between Stalin and Mao in Moscow in 1950 (see page 138). China's military plans were exclusively concerned with Taiwan, Xinjiang and Tibet. Indeed, apart from those areas, the PRC had recently made the decision to cut back on military expenditure and redirect its resources into the rectification campaigns within China (see page 130).

Stalin's motives

What commentators now suggest is that Stalin had colluded with **Kim Il Sung**, the North Korean leader, in organising the venture and that he called on the Chinese to give support only after the fighting had started. Stalin was playing Cold War politics. Having been convinced by Kim that North Korea was capable of sustaining a major war effort against the Americans, Stalin anticipated that the USA would be sucked into a conflict in Asia which it could not win. As he saw it, the great advantage was that war in Korea entailed no risk to the USSR since Soviet forces would not be directly involved.

KEY FIGURE

Kim Il Sung (1912–94)

A Communist revolutionary who held power as autocratic leader in North Korea from 1948 to 1994.

Stalin further calculated that, if the North Koreans could bring the whole of Korea under Communist control, the USA would have been humiliated and the Soviet Union would have acquired a very powerful position in the Far East at very little cost to itself. There was also the consideration that if Mao's PRC could be pushed into the war, it would distract the newly fledged nation from thinking of challenging the USSR's leadership of international communism or causing trouble over disputed Sino-Soviet border territory.

Mao's reaction

KEY TERM

Fait accompli Something done in such a way that it cannot be changed.

Since he had not been a party to the plan devised by Stalin and Kim Il Sung, Mao was at first hesitant to commit China formally to the Korean struggle. But, once he realised the affair was a ***fait accompli***, he felt obliged to enter. Korea was too close geographically for China to remain detached, and, at this early stage in its development, the PRC invariably followed the Soviet lead in international affairs. This was not because the PRC wanted to but because its lack of resources required it to do so. As Jung Chang in her biography of Mao (2005) puts it: 'Chinese soldiers would fight the Americans for Stalin in exchange for Soviet technology and equipment.'

Yet, whatever gains Mao might have been hoping for, he still had difficulty in persuading his military that he had made the right decision. Leading commanders argued that the PRC's primary task was to crush its internal enemies and that it did not have the resources to fight in Korea. Mao's counter-argument was that once US troops had entered Korea it would be impossible for China to stay out; if the Americans were to take Korea they would possess a stepping stone to China itself.

China's entry into the war

The Western view of the Korean crisis was that it was the fault of the North Koreans in crossing the 38th parallel and attacking the South. The PRC counter-claimed that the South Koreans had committed the initial aggression. When American forces under the UN flag landed in Korea in June 1950, Zhou Enlai condemned it as an imperialist invasion. Organised mass demonstrations took place in China's cities. The principal slogan was 'North Korea's friends are our friends. North Korea's enemy is our enemy. North Korea's defence is our defence'.

Zhou warned that China would be forced to intervene if American troops pushed into North Korea. In fact, thousands of PLA soldiers were already fighting alongside the North Koreans as 'volunteers'. In October 1950, US forces crossed northwards over the 38th parallel. China promptly declared itself to be fully engaged in the war. It was to be a three-year struggle before ending in stalemate in 1953.

Consequences of the war

The war settled little but had important consequences for those involved:

- The **Panmunjong truce** which ended the fighting in 1953 left Korea still divided and with no prospect of a Communist takeover of the South.
- PLA deaths numbered around 1 million, a third of the total PLA forces involved.
- The USA pledged itself to the defence of Taiwan and to the continued support of Nationalist China's membership of the UN, a position that was maintained until 1971. This effectively ruled out any possibility of the PRC's reclaiming Taiwan by force.
- The war was a huge drain on the young PRC's economy. Industrial resources earmarked for domestic growth had to be diverted into the war effort.

Benefits for Mao

These were obviously serious consequences, but the war did have some positive results for Mao:

- His call for national unity in the war effort provided a justification for the increasing political and social repression imposed by his government.
- The three-year experience of war hardened China's resolve to stand alone in a hostile world.
- Mao could proudly claim that Chinese comrades had shed their blood in the cause of international communism.
- The PRC for three years had matched the USA in combat and emerged undefeated.

Mao's reaction to Soviet de-Stalinisation

Since Stalin's uncompromising manner had been a major factor in the disharmony between Moscow and Beijing, it was reasonable to expect that after the Soviet leader's death in 1953 relations would ease. This appeared to happen at first; but even as better relations developed, events undermined the possibility of a genuine partnership. In February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev staggered the Communist world by launching a detailed attack on Stalin for his 'crimes against the party'. A particular charge that alarmed Mao was that Stalin had put himself above the party by engaging in a **'cult of personality'** (see page 199). While Mao had had profound differences with Stalin, he was deeply disturbed by this assault on Stalin's record. He read the denunciation of the cult of personality as an intended criticism of his own style of leadership in China. Aware of how easily this charge could be made against him in China, if only by implication, Mao was swift to condemn the Soviet process of de-Stalinisation.

KEY TERMS

Panmunjong truce
The agreement brought the fighting to an end but decided little since the two sides simply agreed to recognise the division of Korea at the 38th parallel.

'Cult of personality'
A reference to the amount of power Stalin had taken into his hands at the expense of the Soviet Communist Party.

KEY TERMS

Eastern bloc The USSR and the central European countries, for example, Poland and Hungary, that it dominated in Eastern Europe.

Soviet satellites The various countries that had fallen under Soviet control between 1945 and 1948 and now made up the Communist bloc.

Mao's concerns over the Communist bloc

Mao was also disturbed by the political developments that occurred in the **Eastern bloc** in the wake of the de-Stalinisation programme. Greater freedom appeared to be offered to the **Soviet satellites** to criticise their Communist governments and to question their subordination to the USSR. This had not been Khrushchev's intention, as he was quick to demonstrate by ordering the suppression of an anti-Soviet rising in Hungary in November 1956. But for Mao the Hungarian rising and those that had occurred in Poland and East Germany were the direct result of 'revisionism', by which he meant the Soviet Union's abandoning of Marxist revolutionary principles.

Mao was equally offended by the Soviet policy of detente. Moscow now seemed to accept that there were alternative ways of achieving revolution other than by armed struggle. Khrushchev had by the late 1950s concluded that, in a world of nuclear superpowers, the notion of a final violent conflict between the international proletariat and the forces of capitalism was no longer acceptable. Some form of compromise which recognised the right of both sides to exist was, therefore, necessary. This was rejected by Mao as heresy. He believed that the final struggle was unavoidable and that it was the duty of all revolutionaries to hasten its coming. For Mao, Khrushchev's policy of detente was clear evidence that the Soviet Union had taken the revisionist path.

Mao's second visit to the USSR 1957

Disturbed by the divisions in the Marxist camp, Khrushchev in 1957 convened a conference in Moscow of the world's Communist parties. His broad purpose was to repair the differences between the USSR and the other Marxist countries. At the meeting, Mao was still prepared to recognise the USSR's unique place in Communist history, but at the same time he let it be known that he regarded Moscow's approach to the West as too accommodating. He called on the Soviet Union to return to the true Marxist–Leninist path. Rather than making concessions to capitalism, it was the Soviet Union's revolutionary duty to fight the international class war. This, Mao said, could not be done by extending peaceful overtures to class enemies – the imperialist Western nations.

Mao's suspicions towards the Soviet Union

Behind Mao's words was his suspicion that the Soviet Union was following a policy of detente with the West in order to leave China internationally isolated. Mao's chief spokesman at the Moscow meeting was Deng Xiaoping, who excelled himself in putting over the Chinese version of international revolution. Deng argued powerfully that the proletarian world revolution was achievable only through armed struggle; capitalism had to be overcome by force. In a tense series of exchanges he talked down the leading Soviet political theorists and won the admiration, if not the open support, of many of the other delegates.

The Sino-Soviet split 1958–69

The anger felt by the Soviets over the Chinese attempt to embarrass them at the Moscow meeting may be regarded as the beginning of a decade-long divide between the PRC and the USSR. There was a strong personal element in the Sino-Soviet enmity.

Mao and Khrushchev

In 1958, in Sino-Soviet negotiations over a joint naval programme, the blundering Soviet ambassador in China gave the impression that the USSR was demanding that China's navy must be brought under Soviet control. Khrushchev flew to Beijing to meet Mao again. His aim was to assure Mao that this was not the Soviet intention. Mao, however, was not disposed to listen. Furthermore, in a tit-for-tat for what he regarded as the poor treatment he had endured during his visits to Moscow (see page 138), Mao deliberately set out to make Khrushchev uncomfortable. He arranged for the Soviet delegation to be put up at a hotel without air-conditioning; the Russians sweltered in Beijing's fierce summer heat and were plagued by mosquitoes.

In one notorious incident, Mao insisted that a round of talks take place in his private pool. Mao was a regular swimmer; Khrushchev hated the water. Nonetheless, to humour his host, Khrushchev agreed. In a pair of baggy shorts and squeezed into a barely buoyant rubber ring, the rotund Soviet leader splashed and floundered while interpreters raced round the pool's edge trying to make sense of his gurgled replies to Mao's questions. The talks were not a success.

PRC accuses USSR of chauvinism

The failure of the Moscow talks was not simply the result of the swimming-pool farce. Deng Xiaoping was again let loose to savage the Russian delegation as he had in Moscow. He attacked the USSR for its 'great nation, great party **chauvinism**', in acting as if it were the only true interpreter of Marxist theory. Deng repeated Mao's accusation that the technical advisers sent to China by Moscow were in fact Soviet spies. He accused the Soviet Union of betraying the international Communist movement. It has been suggested that it was Mao's remembrance of Deng Xiaoping's brilliant onslaught on the USSR that saved Deng from harsher treatment at the time of his disgrace in the Cultural Revolution in 1966 (see page 200).

KEY TERM

Chauvinism Exaggerated belief in the superiority of the ideas and attitudes of one's own nation or group.

The Taiwan issue

In 1958, the simmering Taiwan issue provided another test of the genuineness of Sino-Soviet sympathies. Without consulting Moscow, Mao ordered Chinese forces to make ready for full-scale assault on the Nationalist-held island (see page 133). The USA responded by preparing for war with mainland China. In the event, Mao held back from a direct attack on Taiwan. It is doubtful that he

really intended to attack, but the reason he gave for not doing so was that the USSR had declined to offer China even moral support.

Khrushchev countered by saying that he was unwilling to put the USSR at risk by recklessly 'testing the stability of the capitalist system'. He denounced Mao and the Chinese as **Trotskyists** who had lost all sense of political reality. The resulting deterioration in relations led the Soviet Union to withdraw its economic advisers from China and to cancel its commercial contracts there.

KEY TERM

Trotskyists Followers of Stalin's great rival, Leon Trotsky, who believed in the necessity of world revolution at any cost.

Soviet reaction to China's Great Leap Forward

Sino-Soviet relations were not helped by Moscow's response to China's Great Leap Forward (see page 165). In 1959, Mao was enraged by the news that the Soviet Union had dismissed as a total blunder his attempt to revolutionise the Chinese economy. He was particularly angered by rumours that one of his own chiefs-of-staff, Marshal Peng Dehuai, had passed on to Moscow details of the widespread starvation that the Great Leap Forward had caused.

Sino-Soviet rivalry over Albania

China had condemned de-Stalinisation for the encouragement it had given to reaction and counter-revolution in the Eastern bloc countries. Yet, when the Chinese leaders saw the chance to embarrass the Soviet Union by supporting the socialist countries hostile to the USSR, they took it. In retaliation for what Mao saw as the Soviet Union's attempt to undermine China's standing among the Communist nations, the PRC gave support to those countries which defied the USSR. Albania was an especially clear example. Run by an oppressive neo-Stalinist regime, it was the only Communist state in Europe to recognise China rather than the Soviet Union as the leader of the international revolutionary movement.

In 1961, the Soviet Union, angered by the Albanian government's refusal to accept dictation from Moscow, withdrew its financial aid. The PRC immediately stepped in to supply Albania with money and technical assistance. It did not matter that the country was a minor player on the socialist stage. It was enough for the Chinese that it was on bad terms with the USSR.

China's walkout from the 1961 Moscow Conference

It was the Albanian question that brought matters to a head and led to the severing of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the PRC. The occasion was Zhou Enlai's walkout from the 1961 Moscow Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to which China had been invited as an observer. Khrushchev's speech at the Congress, abusing the Albanian Communist leaders for their backward Stalinist ways, was interpreted by the Chinese as a deliberately intended attack on themselves. Having expected such an onslaught, Zhou and the Chinese delegation quit the hall in accordance with a rehearsed plan.

Sino-Soviet name calling

The collapse of diplomatic relations encouraged the Soviet and Chinese leaders to be still more offensive in their personal references to each other. Khrushchev abused Mao as an 'Asian Hitler' and 'a living corpse'. Mao responded by dismissing his Russian adversary as 'a redundant old boot that ought to be thrown into a corner'. One result of this flurry of insults was the sharpening of the disputes between the USSR and China along their common border. Mao angrily asserted that the refusal of the USSR to return the Chinese territories that Russia had acquired by the 'unequal treaties' of the nineteenth century (see page 34) made it as guilty of imperialism as the original **tsarist** land-grabbers. Beijing's news agency spoke of the 'anti-Chinese atrocities of the new Russian tsars'.

The Sino-Indian War 1962

The Chinese were especially incensed by the USSR's attitude during the Sino-Indian War that broke out in 1962. In its early years, the PRC's relations with its Himalayan neighbour had been very cordial. Both nations had recently emerged from the shadow of foreign domination; the gaining of Indian independence from Britain in 1947 and the formation of the PRC in 1949 were similarly momentous achievements. The two countries seemed to have much in common. Yet Sino-Indian relations have been subject to constant strain. India had responded with alarm when China took over Tibet in 1950. The line between Tibet and India had been drawn by Britain in 1913, an arbitrary boundary that the Chinese had never accepted.

Border clashes between India and the PRC continued throughout the 1950s as the PLA extended its control over Tibet and pushed into Indian territory. Tensions became further stretched in 1959 when the Indian government, in the face of angry protests from Beijing, granted sanctuary in Sikkim to the **Dalai Lama**, who had fled from Communist China. The Sino-Indian War eventually broke out in 1962 along the Himalayan border. The Indian forces came off worse in the bitter conditions. A formal peace was negotiated but for decades the Tibetan issue and the disputed borders question remained unresolved. The Soviet Union was formally neutral but it provided India with fighter-planes and its moral support. Mao regarded the offer by the Soviet Union to act as mediator between the PRC and India as hypocrisy. He rejected it as yet another Soviet attempt to undermine China's international standing.

The Cuban Missile Crisis 1962

A dramatic Cold War episode in 1962 provided China with the opportunity to ridicule the Soviet Union's claim to the leadership of world revolution. Three years earlier, revolutionary forces under Fidel Castro, who later declared himself a Communist, had taken power on the Caribbean island of Cuba. In October 1962, the USSR exploited its influence over Cuba to install rockets and nuclear

KEY TERMS

Tsarist Refers to the traditional system by which Russia was governed by autocratic tsars (emperors) before 1917.

Dalai Lama The spiritual leader of the Lama faith, the traditional Buddhist religion of the Tibetan people.

warheads on the island. Since Cuba stood only 90 miles off the coast of the USA, President Kennedy demanded the withdrawal of the weapons. After a tense standoff, Khrushchev complied. The two superpowers then made a compromise settlement in which the USSR agreed to withdraw all its weapons and installations in Cuba in return for the USA's promise never to invade the island and to withdraw its own nuclear weapons from Turkey.

China mocked Moscow for its original 'adventurism' in siting detectable nuclear warheads in Cuba and for its subsequent 'capitulationism' in abjectly bowing to the American threat to retaliate. Was this, Mao asked contemptuously, the way to inspire the world's struggling masses in their fight against American imperialism?

Sino-Soviet ideological conflict

While the Western response to the ending of the Cuban Missile Crisis was to congratulate both Kennedy and Khrushchev for their statesmanship, Mao described the Soviet withdrawal from Cuba as a betrayal of the revolution. Instead of achieving peace, coexistence simply played into the hands of the imperialist powers by settling issues on their terms. He condemned the Soviet leaders and called on Communists in all other countries to reject Soviet leadership and develop their own form of Marxism along Chinese lines.

The vital concept for Mao was that of 'continuing revolution' (see page 199). Fierce ideological battles over this notion had been fought earlier within the Soviet Union. Trotsky, Stalin's arch opponent in the 1920s and 1930s, had made 'continuing' or 'permanent' revolution the essence of Marxism–Leninism. For Trotsky, revolution was not an event but a continuing process that guaranteed the ultimate victory of the international proletariat. Revolutions which regarded themselves as complete or which were confined to individual countries would cease to be revolutions. Mao Zedong's own definition of continuing revolution corresponded to Trotsky's. Mao wrote: 'Our revolutions are like battles. After a victory, we must at once put forward a new task. In this way, cadres and the masses will forever be filled with revolutionary fervour.'

Rivalry over the leadership of international communism

The dispute between the USSR and China over the meaning of revolution raised the demanding question as to which nation was the real leader of the Communist world. Was it the USSR, direct heir of the great 1917 Revolution, or Mao's China, whose peasant-based revolution in 1949 offered an inspiring model for all oppressed peoples? In strict Marxist theory, true proletarian revolution could occur only in an urban, industrial society. According to Soviet political scientists, China, being a preponderantly rural, peasant society, could not be a fully developed Communist state. They asserted that Mao had distorted Marxism to make it fit the Chinese context. The CCP's theorists retorted that the Soviet Union was betraying world revolution by pursuing a suicidal policy of detente with the West.

Nuclear rivalry

The continuing Sino-Soviet dispute over whether coexistence was compatible with true Marxism–Leninism was at its fiercest over the **Test Ban Treaty** of 1963. Mao dismissed the treaty as another betrayal by the USSR of its revolutionary role: 'Soviet revisionists are uniting with the running dogs of capitalism.' In a formal statement in 1963, he declared that there could be coexistence only between equal nations, but since, in Marxist logic, all pre-revolutionary states were in subjection to the exploiting capitalist power, true equality did not exist. Therefore, it was impossible 'to practise peaceful coexistence with the imperialists and their lackeys'. It was a grave error to assume that there could be peaceful relations between 'oppressed and oppressor classes and between oppressed and oppressor nations'.

KEY TERM

Test Ban Treaty
An agreement in 1963 between the USSR and the Western nuclear powers, in which the parties pledged to end their atmospheric testing of atomic weapons.

The Soviet reply was to accuse the Chinese of total irresponsibility. It was arrogant and dangerous of them to claim to speak for the international working class: 'We might ask the Chinese – What right have you to decide for us questions involving our very existence and our class struggle? – We too want Socialism, but we want to win it through the class struggle, not by unleashing a world thermo-nuclear war.' Khrushchev's accusation was that, rather than seek peace, the Chinese wished to see East and West destroy themselves in nuclear war, leaving China free to dominate what was left of the world. What gave particular irony to Khrushchev's charge was that China was only a year away from exploding its own atomic bomb.

China's nuclear weapons

Since the early 1950s, Moscow's position had been that if Communist China wanted Soviet assistance in its nuclear programme it must give the USSR a controlling hand in the PRC's defence policy. This was too much for Mao. The Soviet demand redoubled his determination to make China a superpower by achieving nuclear status unaided. In 1959, a particularly low point in Sino-Soviet relations was reached when the USSR decided to withdraw its scientists from the PRC. Nonetheless, China, undeterred, pressed on with its own research programme. Chinese nuclear physicists painstakingly pieced together the records that the Soviet advisers had shredded before their hurried departure.

Such efforts brought their reward. In 1964, to great rejoicing with massed crowds singing 'The East is Red' in Mao's honour, Communist China detonated its first atomic device. Three years later, it became a superpower when it produced its first hydrogen bomb. China's remarkable feat allowed it to mock the USSR's refusal to assist. The first Chinese bomb was codenamed 59/6, a reference to the year and month in which the Soviet scientists and technicians had been withdrawn from China. Mao recorded gloatingly: 'This is the result of Khrushchev's "help". By withdrawing the experts he forced us to take our own road. We should give him a big medal.'

Mao's attitude to nuclear war

China's emergence as a nuclear power frightened the outside world. China seemed not to have the same awesome fear of nuclear war that the West and the Soviet Union had. Mao referred to atomic weapons as 'paper tigers'. He told Khrushchev at one of their meetings that despite the destructiveness of atomic weapons, the PRC was quite willing to contemplate nuclear war with its enemies. To Khrushchev's amazement, Mao casually informed him that China's population was so big that it would soon make up any losses it suffered, no matter how great the disaster.

This was in keeping with an earlier CCP statement which indicated China's belief that it could successfully survive a nuclear war, 'On the debris of a dead imperialism, the victorious Chinese people would create very swiftly a civilisation thousands of times higher than the capitalist system and a truly beautiful future for themselves.' Mao believed that China's emergence as a superpower and its refusal to be frightened of 'paper tigers' had confirmed its position as the true champion of the oppressed peoples of the world.

At the time of his fall from power in the USSR, Khrushchev was still trying to convince the rest of the Marxist world that the Maoist brand of communism was heretical. His policy of isolating China was continued by the collective leadership that superseded him in 1964. In the fierce Sino-Soviet propaganda war, each side accused the other of a long list of crimes against communism. The USSR resurrected the spectre of the 'yellow peril' (see page 42).

Mao's reaction to the Brezhnev doctrine

Sino-Soviet relations, already at a low ebb, were made worse by the Cultural Revolution; Moscow condemned the excess and extremism of Mao's programme (see page 195). Mao resented this as another example of Soviet 'great power chauvinism'. He soon had the chance to turn the tables. In 1968, Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet hardline leader, acting in accordance with the **Brezhnev doctrine**, sent Soviet forces into the Czechoslovak capital to suppress the '**Prague spring**'.

Mao had no time for counter-revolution in Communist states but he was unwilling to accept the right of the USSR, by his reckoning itself a socialist **apostate**, to impose Soviet authority on the members of the Marxist camp. Mao's confidence in speaking out against the Soviet Union had undoubtedly been buoyed by the fact that China was now a superpower.

The significance of the 1969 military confrontation

In 1969, Brezhnev called an international Communist conference in Moscow with the aim of outlawing China. However, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had weakened the USSR's moral leadership and the conference was largely a failure from Brezhnev's perspective; he did not get the outright

KEY TERMS

Brezhnev doctrine The demand that all international Communist parties should toe the Soviet line. If they failed to do so, they must be disciplined by the other Marxist states acting as 'a socialist community' under Soviet leadership.

Prague spring The attempt in 1968 of the Czech Communist government to liberalise its policies and assert its independence of Soviet control.

Apostate A person or nation that abandons its original political or religious beliefs.

condemnation of China that he had wanted. The year 1969 marked the lowest point in the relations between the two Communist superpowers. Serious border incidents threatened to turn into full-scale war. In an extraordinary development, the PRC and the Soviet repositioned their nuclear-armed rockets so that they now faced inwards towards each other rather than outwards towards their Western enemies. This may have been bluff and counter-bluff but there was no doubting that Sino-Soviet relations had reached their **nadir**. This was powerfully expressed by **Lin Biao** (Lin Piao) in 1969 when he denounced the Soviet 'revisionists', whom, in a reverse insult, he called **social fascists**. He accused Brezhnev of 'acting like a new tsar'. It was clear that international communism had seriously fragmented.

Impact of Mao's death on Sino-Soviet relations

Mao's death in 1976, which was soon followed by the overthrow of the fanatically anti-Soviet Gang of Four (see page 229), effectively removed the immediate danger of Sino-Soviet nuclear confrontation. Despite the previous difficulties, the new leaders of the PRC, Deng Xiaoping in particular, adopted a much more tolerant line towards both the USSR and the West. Deng Xiaoping may be said to have adopted Zhou Enlai's accommodating style as an international statesman. He deliberately toned down the aggressive anti-Soviet approach which he had shown while serving under Mao. The possibility of nuclear war between China and either the USA or the USSR became increasingly remote.

4 The impact of the Cultural Revolution on external affairs

▶ *How did the Cultural Revolution affect the PRC's foreign relations?*

For the outside world, one of the most disturbing aspects of the Cultural Revolution, which Mao launched in 1966 with the aim of purging the CCP and the PRC of all reactionary elements (see page 198), was that its victims were not restricted to the Chinese people. In disregard of the right of other nations and in defiance of all the accepted rules of international diplomacy, a total of eleven **foreign embassies** were attacked and their staff assaulted. With only minimal interference from the police, young Maoists known as Red Guards were allowed to besiege foreign embassies and terrorise the people who worked in them. Among the examples were:

- the surrounding of the Soviet embassy by Red Guards who kept up a 24-hour barrage of insults
- the besieging of the Dutch **chargé d'affaires** and his family in their house for over a month

KEY FIGURE

Lin Biao (1907–71)

The creator of the cult of Mao and the PRC's second in command from 1966 until his death in 1971, after being implicated in a plot to assassinate Mao.

KEY TERMS

Nadir The lowest point.

Social fascists A term first used by Stalin to denote those who were willing to compromise with their political enemies.

Foreign embassies In international convention, these are specially protected areas which the host nation respects as being immune from local interference.

Chargé d'affaires Equivalent to an ambassador.

KEY TERM

Attaché Official government representative.

- the seizure of a French commercial **attaché** and his wife, who were then screamed at for six hours by Maoists
- two secretaries from the Indian embassy being grabbed at Beijing airport before they could board their plane and being badly beaten
- the breaking into and burning of the British embassy in Beijing, accompanied by physical attacks on mission personnel.

Donald Hopson, the head of the British embassy, sent a vivid despatch (Source C) to his government, describing what had happened:

SOURCE C

'The burning of the British office in Peking', confidential report sent to the Foreign Office, 8 September 1967, quoted in Roderick Macfarquar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, Belknap Press, 2006, p. 226.

Outside the crowd broke the glass of the windows, but the bars and plywood shutters held. The mob then started to burn straw at the windows. We threw water through the gaps, but the room began to fill with smoke. We could see the glare of many fires, and it was now clear that the mob would soon be through the wall and there was a danger that we should be burned alive if we stayed. I gave orders for the emergency exit to be opened. We were hauled by our hair, half-strangled with our ties, kicked and beaten on the head with bamboo poles.

Most of the staff had similar experiences to my own. Some were paraded up and down, forced to their knees and photographed in humiliating positions. All were beaten and kicked, and the girls were not spared lewd attentions from the prying fingers of the mob. Most of the staff were eventually rescued by the army and plain-clothes police agents.

? What are the likely explanations for the attack on the British embassy and staff, as described in Source C?

Chinese attacks abroad

The attacks on foreigners were not confined within China. Disregarding the damage it did to its image abroad, the PRC carried its Cultural Revolution ferociously into other countries. By 1967, Chinese militants had caused violent incidents in over 30 countries around the world. In some of these the local people hit back; in Burma and Indonesia, Chinese expatriates were attacked in retaliation.

The resentment aroused abroad by the presence in many Asian countries of large numbers of Chinese was intensified at the time of the Cultural Revolution when Maoist fanatics became a highly volatile and troublesome local presence. It had been a regular feature of Asian history for large numbers of Chinese to live and work in other Asian countries. This pattern continued after 1949. Rather than integrate into the local culture, the Chinese settlers tended to regard themselves as a discrete group whose first loyalty was to the PRC. This was encouraged by Beijing, which granted its expatriates full Chinese citizenship. The result was particularly evident in Indonesia and Burma. In any dispute that those countries had with the PRC, the expatriates took the side of Communist China and became a source of subversion.

Amazing scenes occurred in London in August 1967 when scores of embassy staff members, all shouting Mao's name, came out of their premises in Portland Place armed with sticks and machetes, which they waved threateningly at the police. Safe from arrest because of their diplomatic immunity, they demonstrated loudly and went back into their embassy building only after they had caused major disruption in the area.

Trouble in Hong Kong

Mao used the opportunity provided by the Cultural Revolution to make trouble for Britain over its continuing possession of Hong Kong (see page 260). In May 1967, he tried to turn a workers' strike in the colony into an anti-British demonstration, in the hope that the police would fire on the demonstrators, thus illustrating the evils of British colonialism in China. When the local police declined to act in this way, Mao instructed Zhou Enlai to send Chinese terrorists into the colony to kill policemen and so create the desired retaliation. In an eight-week period the terrorists assassinated five policemen and exploded over 160 bombs, causing scores of civilian deaths and extensive damage to property. The Hong Kong authorities still did not resort to the extreme measures that Mao had expected; the massacre he had wanted did not occur.

The notable aspect of the whole affair was that, although Mao wished to frighten the British into thinking that the PRC was preparing to take Hong Kong by force, he had no intention of going through with such a plan. He wanted to embarrass the British but not to push things to the point where he would have to carry out his bluff. He told Zhou Enlai to stop short of actions that 'might lead to our having to take Hong Kong back ahead of time'. Events were to show that the PRC could afford to wait; time was on its side (see page 263).

Despite these episodes, the PRC's relations with Britain considerably improved in the 1970s. Two main factors help to explain this:

- One was the American abandonment of its support of Taiwan, dating back to the late 1940s, and its recognition of the PRC as the legitimate government of the whole of China. This had been followed by the official visit of President Nixon to Beijing in 1972 to meet Mao, an event that marked the moment when the previously hostile East–West relations began to improve (see page 134). Britain, as the USA's ally, was wholly supportive of the American move.
- A second factor, strongly relating to the US initiative, was that soon after leaving office in 1974, **Edward Heath** was the first major British politician to visit the PRC, where he was warmly welcomed as a Western statesman who was prepared to understand and cooperate with Communist China. The succeeding Labour government in the UK (1974–9) was able to build on Britain's improved relations with the PRC. The trade and diplomatic agreements Britain made with Communist China indicated that while the countries were still much divided, there were grounds for thinking that the old hostilities were easing.

KEY FIGURE

Edward Heath (1916–2005)

British Conservative, prime minister 1970–4, who became strongly sympathetic towards Mao and the PRC.

Chapter summary

Mao's creation of the Communist PRC in 1949 was a major development in the Cold War. His ruthless reunification campaigns which consolidated his hold over mainland China convinced the West that they now faced a second world power committed to Communist expansion. Mutual distrust, based initially on the USA's continued support of Taiwan and its refusal to recognise the PRC as the true China, turned into decades of tension, made more dangerous by such factors as China's development of nuclear weapons and Mao's consistent fears of an American attack. It took until the early 1970s for an improvement in relations, heralded by President Nixon's official visit to Mao in 1972.

Confounding Western fears, the Soviet Union and the PRC, after early cooperation, developed a fierce rivalry in which border disputes, ideological differences and Mao's personality clash with successive Soviet leaders figured prominently. The PRC's successful development as a nuclear superpower by 1967 intensified Soviet anxieties and led to deeper disagreement over the Soviet policy of coexistence with the West. By 1969, Sino-Soviet relations reached their lowest point, with the two sides involved in a nuclear standoff.

Although the Cultural Revolution had further damaged the PRC's foreign reputation, the death of Mao in 1976 made for an easing in China's relations with the outside world.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. Why were the PRC's reunification campaigns of concern to the Western world?
2. Why was the status of Taiwan such a divisive issue between the PRC and the USA?
3. How did the Korean War affect the relations of the PRC with both the USA and the Soviet Union?
4. Why was Nixon's 1972 visit to the PRC such a major event in East–West relations?
5. In what sense was the lifting of the 'bamboo curtain' an anti-Soviet move?
6. Did the PRC gain or lose from the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1950?
7. What lay at the root of the mutual suspicion between Mao and Stalin?
8. Why was Mao disturbed by the Soviet policy of de-Stalinisation?
9. Why was Mao opposed to the Soviet Union's pursuit of coexistence with the West?
10. Why did the development of the PRC as a nuclear power further divide the PRC and the Soviet Union?
11. Why, during the Cultural Revolution, did the PRC adopt an aggressive attitude to the outside world?
12. What impact did the death of Mao in 1976 have on the PRC's foreign relations?

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1 To what extent was the issue of Taiwan the cause of the strained relations between the USA and Communist China in the period 1949 and 1972?

2 'It was Mao's concerns over growing Soviet intervention in Chinese affairs that led to the Sino-Soviet military confrontation in 1969.' How far do you agree with this statement about Mao's perception of hostile Soviet intentions towards China between 1961 and 1969?

SOURCE ANALYSIS QUESTION

1 Assess the value of Source 1 for revealing the particular fears of the Chinese concerning the behaviour of the Soviet Union and for revealing the underlying reasons for the Sino-Soviet split, 1961–9.

SOURCE 1

From an address by Deng Xiaoping, head of the Chinese delegation, at a joint meeting in Moscow of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), 8 July 1963, quoted in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, March 1998. Here Deng addresses the CPSU directly.

We have always considered and still consider that the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU [1956] put forward positions on the issues of war and peace, peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition that went against Marxism–Leninism.

In June 1959 you unilaterally annulled the agreement on rendering help to China in developing a nuclear industry and in producing atom bombs.

Following this, on 9 September 1959, TASS [the official Soviet news agency] made an announcement about the incident on the Chinese–Indian border and displayed bias in favor of the Indian reaction, making the disagreements between China and the Soviet Union clear to the whole world for the first time.

In February 1960, during the meeting of the Political Consultative Council of the participating countries of the Warsaw Pact, Comrade Khrushchev spoke rudely using an expression like 'old galoshes'. Meanwhile, the CPSU, in its oral presentation to the CCP, accused China of committing such mistakes as a 'narrowly nationalist approach' and of acting on 'narrowly nationalist interest,' in relation to the issues of the Indian–Chinese border.

On 16 July 1960, the Soviet side unilaterally decided to withdraw between 28 July and 1 September over 1,300 Soviet specialists working in China. Over 900 specialists were recalled and contracts and agreements were broken.

On 25 August 1962, The Soviet government informed China that it was ready to conclude an agreement with the United States on the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In our view, you were pursuing an unseemly goal in coming to such an agreement, namely: to bind China by the hands and feet through an agreement with the United States.

After India started a major attack on the border regions of China in October 1962, the Soviet Union began to supply India with even larger quantities of military materiel.

The facts we have cited above testify to the fact that comrades from the CPSU have taken further steps to create a split in the ranks of the international Communist movement.

CHAPTER 7

Government, economy and society under Mao after 1949

Having defeated the Nationalists in the 1945–9 Civil War, Mao led his Chinese Communist Party (CCP) into power. As head of the People's Republic of China (PRC), established in 1949, Mao imposed his will on party and people by ruthless means. Judging that the PRC had to develop its economy to survive, Mao extended his revolutionary ideas into a radical restructuring of agriculture and industry. His policies had disastrous social consequences and aroused opposition. His response was to intensify coercion. This chapter covers these themes under the following headings:

- ★ Government of China under Mao after 1949
- ★ The economy: industry
- ★ The economy: agriculture
- ★ Social change under Mao

The key debate on *page 161* of this chapter asks the question: What were Mao's motives in launching the Hundred Flowers campaign?

Key dates

1949	PRC established	**1952–6**	First Five-Year Plan
1950	Sino-Soviet Treaty signed	**1958–62**	Great Leap Forward
1951	'Anti-movements' launched		China's great famine
1952	Political parties other than the CCP banned	**1959**	Lushan Conference

1 Government of China under Mao after 1949

▶ *What form did Mao's organisation of the PRC take?*

Initial steps

On taking power in 1949, Mao was well aware that, although the Chinese middle classes were a relatively small part of an overwhelmingly peasant population, their importance was greater than their numbers. It was they who provided the civil servants and the industrial managers. They were promised that if they pledged themselves to the new China they would suffer no retaliation for their past behaviour. For a short period this undertaking

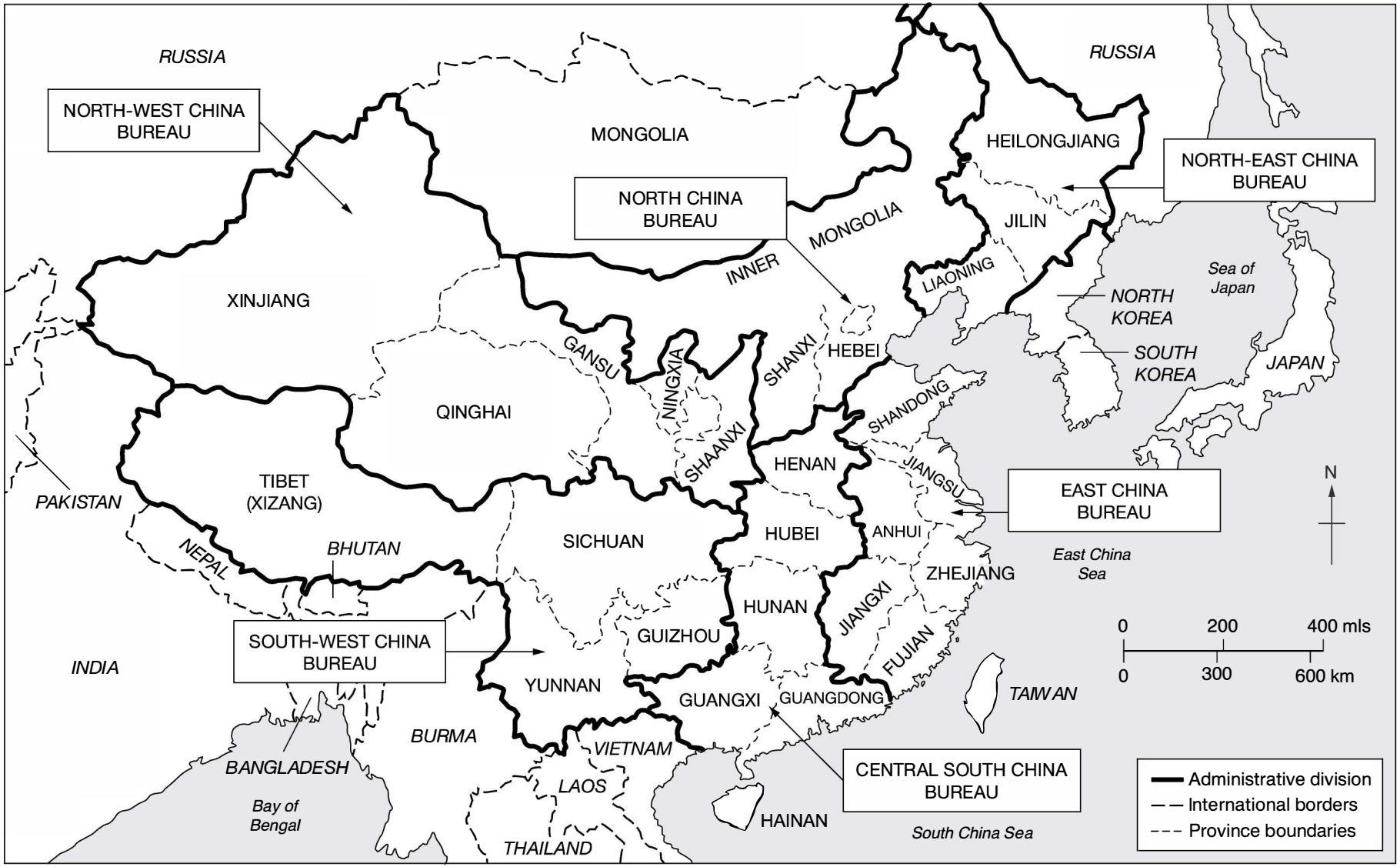


Figure 7.1 Map showing the administrative regions of the PRC.

was honoured, but once the officials had served their purpose by providing the young People's Republic of China (PRC) with the necessary continuity of administration they were turned on and persecuted.

The structure of the PRC

For administrative purposes, the PRC was divided into six regions, each governed by a bureau of four major officials:

- chairman
- party secretary
- military commander
- political commissar.

Since the last two posts were filled by officers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), this effectively left China under military control. The overarching governmental power resided in the Central People's Government Council. This was made up of 56 leading party members, the majority of whom were veterans of the Yanan years. Six of these served as vice-chairmen under Mao who, as chairman of the Council, was the unchallengeable figure in government.

Communist Party rule in the PRC under Mao

It should be noted that despite the coercive society that Mao's China was in practice, in theory it was one of the freest in the world. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) claimed that all power rested with the people and that the party officials and the government acted as servants of the nation. Figure 7.2 shows a model of how the government supposedly operated. It was the workers and peasants who exercised authority through the various connected and overlapping bodies.

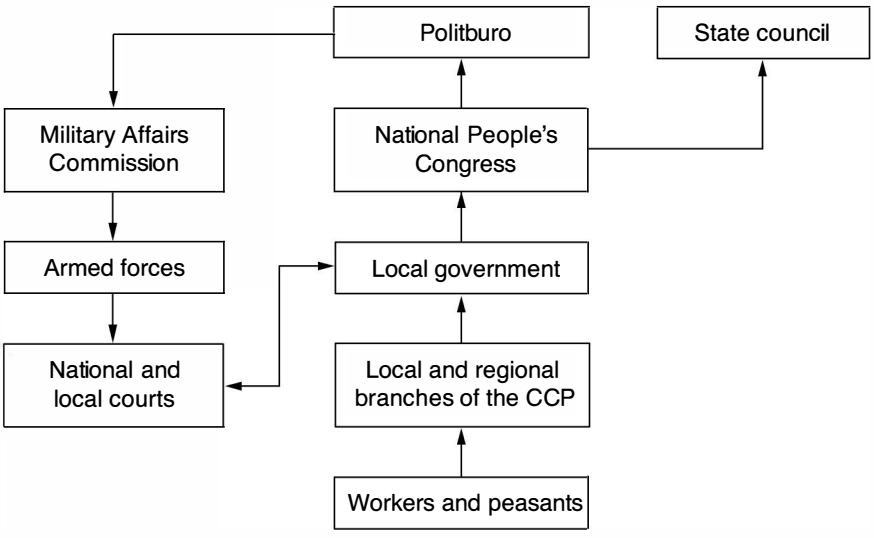


Figure 7.2 Diagram of the pattern of CCP rule.

The Chinese Communists made much of the claim that elections for party officials and administrators were held in the villages, localities and regions. What was not emphasised was that only one party, the CCP, could stand for election, all others being outlawed. An additional factor was that party officials oversaw all the elections, which meant that there was little real chance of anyone critical of Mao or the government ever being successful. The reality was that in the PRC the Communist Party, not the people, ruled.

Moreover, the party in this context did not mean all the members of the CCP. In effect, government was carried on by the **Politburo**. The National People's Congress, made up of elected CCP representatives, simply rubber-stamped the decisions made by the Politburo; its job was to applaud the party's leaders when they made their appearances on the platform. There was never a genuine case of the Congress's challenging, let alone reversing, party policy on any issue that mattered.

KEY TERM

Politburo An inner core of some twenty leading members of the party.

Mao's authority over the Politburo

The Politburo, in turn, was under the authority of Mao Zedong. This did not mean that he initiated every detail of policy; sometimes he chose not to attend Politburo meetings. Nevertheless, nothing could be done of which he disapproved. His was the ultimate authority. What adds to the oddity of Mao's position is that his power did not rest on any formal position that he held. It is true that he was chairman of the party but the title did not confer power on him; rather, it was a recognition of the power that he already wielded. That was why he was able on occasion to withdraw from the political frontline, as at the time of the famine in the early 1960s (see page 173), and then later return with his power undiminished.

Democratic centralism

Western observers were sometimes puzzled by the Chinese situation in which a party, dedicated to the notion of the rule of the masses, allowed itself to be controlled by one man, Mao Zedong. Part of the answer lies in the concept of democratic centralism. This idea had first been formulated by Lenin in Russia. The argument, which Mao took up and applied to his own interpretation of revolution in China, was that true democracy in the Communist Party lay in the obedience of the members to the authority and instructions of the leaders. The justification for this was that while, as representatives of the workers, all Communists were genuine revolutionaries, only the leaders were sufficiently educated in the science of revolution to understand what needed to be done.

In practice, democratic centralism meant the Chinese Communists doing what Mao told them to do. One of the ironies of this was that in spite of the power that he wielded, Mao became increasingly paranoid. The more authority he gained, the more he feared that opposition to him was growing. It is a feature of his personality that explains why he was so ready to launch anti-movements and purges against those he suspected irrationally of plotting to overthrow him.

The 'anti-movements'

In a key move towards imposing political control, Mao, in 1951, announced the beginning of the three 'anti-movements', the targets being the elimination of:

- waste
- corruption
- inefficiency.

This was expanded in 1952 into the five 'anti-movements', which were intended to stimulate the economy by attacking:

- industrial sabotage
- tax evasion
- bribery
- fraud
- theft of government property.

The identification of particular targets was not in itself important. The object was to provide as wide a justification as possible to attack class enemies. From 1951 onwards, an atmosphere of terror was systematically created by the 'anti-movements', launched against those whom the CCP regarded as socially or politically suspect. The Chinese people were encouraged to expose all who had cooperated with the former Guomindang (GMD) government. China became a nation of informers. It was enough for individuals to be accused by their neighbours of having belonged to the privileged classes for them to be publicly denounced and to have their property seized. Their pleas of loyalty to Mao's new China were ignored.

The vengeful atmosphere was intensified by China's involvement in the Korean War of 1950–3 (see page 139). This struggle placed great demands on the young PRC and made those who were less than wholehearted in supporting it open to the charge that they were imperilling the nation's existence. Some of the worst excesses occurred in the countryside, where millions of landlords were brutally dispossessed of their lands which were then redistributed among the peasants.

Purges of party members

Purges were also carried out within the CCP. Members who did not slavishly follow the **party line** were liable to be condemned as 'rightists' who were opposed to the progress of the PRC. Purges were alternated with periods when party members were encouraged to criticise current policies and air their grievances. Those who were rash enough to do so were then attacked as 'rightists'. The apparent liberalising was invariably followed by the imposition of even tougher restrictions on freedom of expression. Such purges were to become a recurrent feature of Chinese politics until Mao's death in 1976.

KEY TERMS

Purges In theory, the purifying of the party by removing the corrupt elements within it; in practice, a convenient method for removing opponents and critics.

Party line Party policy and attitudes as defined by the leaders, to be followed by the members.

SOURCE A



A landlord being tried in 1953 by a people's court, one of many set up to deliver summary justice in the countryside.

What clues does the photo in Source A offer regarding the way in which trials in the people's courts were conducted?

The PRC: a one-party state

On the pretext of defending the people from their enemies, Mao and the CCP began to resort to terror as a basic method of control. It soon became clear that China was to be turned into a one-party state. At the time of the Communist success in 1949, there had been over ten separate political parties in China. These included the **Left GMD** and the **Democratic League**. By 1952, they had disappeared, destroyed in a set of repressive moves which denied the right of any party other than the CCP to exist.

KEY TERMS

Left GMD and the **Democratic League** Splinter parties which had broken away from Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists and sided with the Communists.

Mass terror

The political purges were accompanied by a series of mass campaigns aimed at extending the CCP's authority over the people of China. A concerted attack was launched against 'anti-socials, counter-revolutionaries and imperialists', catch-all terms that were used to condemn anyone who showed signs of disapproving of the Communist regime. Particular CCP severity was evident in the early 1950s in Shanghai and Guangzhou, cities which had been notorious for their underworld gangs and triads in the years of Nationalist rule. Having used the local knowledge of the former gangsters to consolidate its hold on the city, the CCP turned on them in a violent bloodletting. Of the 130,000 'bandits and

criminals' rounded up by the authorities in Guangzhou, over half were executed. A similar process led to a death toll of 28,000 in Shanghai.

As part of the CCP's coercion of China, youth organisations were either closed down or taken over by party **cadres**. Religion was selected for special attack (see page 183). China was being structured as a society of informers in which conformity was maintained by exploiting the traditional fear Chinese people had of being publicly exposed as political or social deviants.

KEY TERM

Cadres Dedicated Communist Party workers whose special task was to spy and report on fellow CCP members.

Registration

A notable method by which the party imposed its will was the system that required individuals to register themselves. There were three main types:

- the *danwei* – a permit without which an individual could not hold a job
- the *hukou* – a certificate which entitled a family to obtain accommodation
- the *dangan* – a dossier held by local party officials containing the personal details and record of every individual.

Of the three, the *dangan* was the most intrusive. A veritable army of party clerks spent their working hours collecting and collating material on everyone in the population. Hundreds of millions of records were kept. The *dangans* became the chief means by which the authorities maintained political and social control over the Chinese people. A person's right to employment, housing or a pension, or indeed to freedom, depended on the contents of the dossier.

The Hundred Flowers campaign 1957

Mao's oppressive methods extended to the Communist Party itself and showed that he could be devious as well as authoritarian. In 1956, Mao informed his government and party colleagues that, with the consolidation of the PRC proving successful, it would now be an appropriate time to allow greater freedom of expression to those who might wish to comment constructively on how well Communist China was achieving its aim of turning the nation into a proletarian state. Early in 1957, under the slogan, 'Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend', Mao called on critics within the party to state openly where they thought the government and the CCP had gone wrong.

Once they had overcome their initial fear that they might be accused of being anti-party, members rushed to respond by pointing out the mistakes that had been made. Individuals and policies were complained against on the grounds of corruption, inefficiency and lack of realism. Leading figures in government, education and the arts were heavily censured for their failures. Things even went so far as to include mild criticism of Mao himself.

Mao's U-turn

Shaken by the flood of criticism, Mao immediately called a halt to the campaign. Everything now went into reverse. The Hundred Flowers campaign was abandoned and replaced by an 'anti-rightist' movement. Those who had been foremost in responding to Mao's call to let a hundred schools of thought contend were now forced to retract their statements. University staff and school teachers, research scientists, economists, writers and artists were rounded on. Mao described the campaign against them as 'squeezing the pus out of an abscess'.

The party was purged of those members who had been too free with their objections to government and party orders. Those who had cooperated by helping a hundred schools of thought contend were now made to confess their 'evil thoughts' and purge themselves through 're-education' in remote labour camps. Some were to languish in such places for twenty years. Estimates of the number of victims vary between 500,000 and 750,000 party members. What had begun as a call for free thought had ended as a programme of thought control.

2 Key debate

▶ *What were Mao's motives in launching the Hundred Flowers campaign?*

Many historians have discussed the question of why Mao introduced the Hundred Flowers campaign. They are interested in this particular theme because it relates to the essential question of how Mao governed China.

Was it a ruse?

Some writers, most notably Jung Chang in her 2005 biography of Mao, argue that the speed with which he reversed his policy was proof that from the beginning the campaign had been a trick on his part. She suggests that, far from being intended as a liberalising measure, it was a deliberate manoeuvre by Mao to bring his critics into the open so that they could be easily exposed, identified and removed.

EXTRACT 1

From Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, Jonathan Cape, 2005, p. 435.

Few guessed that Mao was setting a trap, and that he was inviting people to speak out so that he could use what they said as an excuse to victimise them. Mao's targets were intellectuals and the educated, the people most likely to speak up.

As Jung Chang sees it, the Hundred Flowers campaign was part of the movement towards a controlled society in which all expression of opinion had to meet the criteria of political correctness as defined by Mao. The way in which the 'anti-rightist' campaign purged the government and party of his critics was of a scale and ruthlessness that anticipated the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution a decade later (see page 165). This is a strongly put case. However, there are other viewpoints.

Was Mao genuinely seeking criticism?

Lee Feigon, an American scholar, in a revisionist argument published in 2002, contended that Mao had been genuine in his original appeal for ideas to be expressed. This was not to say Mao was being tolerant. His intention was to undermine the bureaucrats in the government who in the short time that the PRC had been in existence had come to have too big an influence in the running of affairs.

EXTRACT 2

From Lee Feigon, *Mao: A Reinterpretation*, Ivan R. Dee, 2002, p. 112.

By giving scientists and engineers the freedom to express their ideas, Mao sought to prevent party bureaucrats from interfering with technical decisions. He wanted intellectuals to expose and attack corruption and bureaucracy. He also wanted peasants, students and workers to speak out and even demonstrate to prevent government bureaucrats from running roughshod over their rights.

Was the campaign part of a structured process?

Interpreting the motives behind the campaign as sinister, Yves Chevrier, a French scholar, suggests that the Hundred Flowers campaign was a stage in an unfolding process by which Mao set out to reassert his authority and destroy all vestiges of opposition.

EXTRACT 3

From Yves Chevrier, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*, Interlink Books, 2004, p. 123.

The 100 Flowers turned out to be the eye of the cyclone that would bring the Great Leap, itself a precursor of the Cultural Revolution. This moment of open debate when contradictions were openly discussed for the first time in years, was like a carnivorous flower, ready to close upon its prey. It enabled Mao's political comeback within the party leadership.

Was the campaign simply a muddle?

Jonathan Spence, widely acknowledged by his fellow historians as an outstanding authority on Mao's China, dismisses the idea that the Hundred

Flowers campaign was a ruse by Mao to bring his enemies into the open. Spence sees the affair as the confused result of contradictory thinking among the CCP leaders:

EXTRACT 4

From Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, W.W. Norton, 1990, p. 574.

It was rather, a muddled and inconclusive movement that grew out of conflicting attitudes within the CCP leadership. At its core was an argument about the pace and development that was best for China, a debate about the nature of the First Five-year Plan and the promise for further growth. From that debate and the political tensions that accompanied it sprang the Great Leap Forward.

How far do Extracts 1–4 concur or differ in their interpretation of Mao's motives for introducing the Hundred Flowers campaign in 1957?

Notwithstanding their varying interpretations, most scholars agree that whatever Mao's motives may have been, it was the scale of the criticism that took him aback. He had not realised the extent of the dissatisfaction within the party which the campaign had revealed. In terms of outcome, it made little difference whether he had intended from the first to flush out his critics. The result was the same: Mao used the findings to crush those he thought were opposed to him.

3 The economy: industry

What were Mao's objectives in his reforming the Chinese economy?

Mao used the term 'walking on two legs' to refer to his belief that China could achieve the simultaneous growth of food production on the land and industrial production in the urban areas.

The Soviet-inspired cult of heavy industry

Mao's early attempts to modernise the Chinese economy carried the stamp of Soviet influence. Stalin had described his industrialisation plans for the USSR as an attempt to establish a war economy. He declared that he was making war on the failings of Russia's past and on the class enemies within the nation. He also claimed that he was preparing the USSR for war against its capitalist foes abroad. This was not simply martial imagery. Stalin regarded iron, steel and oil as the sinews of war. Their successful production would guarantee the strength and readiness of the nation to face its capitalist enemies. For Stalin, industry meant **heavy industry**. He made a cult of it, believing that the industrial revolutions which had made Western Europe and North America strong had been based on iron and steel production. It followed that the USSR must adopt a similar industrial pattern in its drive towards modernisation. The difference would be that, whereas the West had taken the capitalist road, the USSR would

KEY TERM

Heavy industry Iron- and steel-based products and constructions.

follow the path of socialism. To achieve this, Stalin introduced a series of **Five-Year Plans**, intended as a form of applied Marxism.

KEY TERM

Five-Year Plans In the USSR between 1929 and 1953, Stalin revolutionised the Soviet economy by a set of government-directed Five-Year Plans aimed at achieving a massive increase in industrial output.

The PRC's dependence on the Soviet Union

Initially reliant on Soviet assistance and impressed by the apparent success of Stalin's Five-Year Plans, Mao wanted the PRC to build on the same model. He judged that his new China could not survive without the USSR's economic assistance. The reality was that the PRC's isolation in a capitalist world left it unable to obtain adequate resources and expertise from anywhere else. Mao was resolved to gain economic independence, but until that was achieved (see page 166) he could not afford to break the link with the Soviet Union. This was clear from the PRC's signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty in 1950, an agreement which while bringing China much needed finance, had left it exploited by the Soviet Union (see page 138).

China's first Five-Year Plan 1952–6

In 1952, China's first Five-Year Plan was introduced. Its aim was to develop the state-directed growth of heavy industry. A partial basis for this already existed. During their period of government in the 1930s and 1940s, the GMD had established a National Resources Committee (NRC) which had taken control of industrial investment policy. A large number of NRC managers and over 200,000 of its workforce had stayed on in China after 1949. In addition, a significant population shift had begun with the coming to power of the CCP. Between 1949 and 1957, migration from the countryside to the towns nearly doubled the urban population from 57 million to 100 million. The result was that, as the PRC began its economic reforms, it already had available a large potential workforce and considerable industrial expertise.

Under the plan, the areas targeted for increased production were coal, steel and petrochemicals. Attention was also to be given to the development of a Chinese automobile and transport industry. As a morale boost, a number of spectacular civil-engineering projects were undertaken. An outstanding example was the construction of a vast road and rail bridge across the Yangzi River at Nanjing.

The plan's success

The degree of success achieved by the plan can be gauged from Table 7.1 (opposite).

Care has to be taken with these statistics. As in the USSR under Stalin, so in the PRC under Mao, there was a tendency for officials to massage the figures relating to economic performance. All those in the spiral of command from CCP officials and industrial managers down to foremen and workers were anxious to appear to be fulfilling their targets. The presence of party cadres checking on production targets meant that in many areas of industry there was what amounted to an organised conspiracy to adjust the figures so that they appeared as impressive as possible.

Table 7.1 The first Five-Year Plan 1952–6

Gross industrial output	1952 Output targets	1957 Output achieved
Value in millions of **yuans**	53,560	65,020
Particular areas of production		
Coal (millions of tonnes)	113	115
Oil (millions of tonnes)	2,012	1,458
Steel (millions of tonnes)	4.12	5.35
Electric power (billions of kilowatts)	15.9	19.34
Hydro-electric turbines (kilowatts)	79,000	74,900
Machine tools (units)	12,720	28,000
Locomotives (units)	200	167
Freight cars (units)	8,500	7,300
Merchant ships (tonnes)	179,000	54,000
Trucks (units)	4,000	7,500
Bicycles (units)	550,000	1,174,000
Manufactured chemicals (thousands of tonnes)	1,580	2,087

KEY TERM

Yuan China's currency; worth approximately 10p in 1950 values.

The statistics in Table 7.1, which have been filtered through Western analyses, do indicate a considerable degree of success for the plan, this at a time when the Korean War required China to finance a major war effort (see page 139). Table 7.2 indicates the large proportion of expenditure devoted to the war effort.

Table 7.2 PRC expenditure (as percentages of national budget)

Area of expense	1950	1952	1957
Economic development	25.5%	45.4%	51.4%
Education and culture	11.1%	13.6%	16.0%
Defence	41.5%	26.0%	19.0%
Government administration	19.3%	10.3%	7.8%
Miscellaneous	2.6%	4.7%	5.8%
Total (millions of yuans)	6,810	16,790	29,020

China's economic growth rate of nearly nine per cent between 1953 and 1957 compared favourably with that of the USSR in the 1930s. In the circumstances of the 1950s, it was natural that China should measure itself against the yardstick of the Soviet Union's industrial performance and seek to match its success.

The Great Leap Forward 1958–62

The Great Leap Forward was the term Mao used to describe the second Five-Year Plan, 1958–62. His aim was to turn the PRC into a modern industrial state in the shortest possible time. He believed that by revolutionising China's agriculture and industry the PRC could build an economy that would catch up with those of the major nations and then overtake them.

Mao had led the Chinese peasants to victory in 1949. Yet he was convinced that China's future as a great power actually depended not on the peasants and agriculture but on the workers and industry. It was industrialisation that mattered. He held that history had reached the stage where China, having lagged behind the rest of the advanced industrialised world, would now surpass it purely through the dedicated efforts of the Chinese people led by their inspired Communist government. That was why he used the word 'Leap'. China would bypass the stages through which the advanced nations had gone, and go straight from being a rural, agricultural economy to becoming an urban, industrial one.

As he described it, the Great Leap Forward would allow China 'to overtake all capitalist countries in a fairly short time, and become one of the richest, most advanced and powerful countries in the world'. In 1957, while attending a gathering of international Communist leaders in Moscow, he declared (Source B):

SOURCE B

From Mao's speech at the Congress of Communist Parties in Communist Countries, 18 November 1957, quoted in Michael Y.M. Kau and John K. Leung, editors, *The Writings of Mao Zedong 1949–1976*, volume 2, M.E. Sharpe, 1986, p. 788.

The imperialists are like the sun at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, while we are like the sun at six o'clock in the morning. The east wind is bound to prevail over the west wind, because we are powerful and strong. The problem is that you just cannot decide things with the quantity of steel and iron; rather, first and foremost, things are determined by people's hearts and minds. It has always been like that in history. In history, the weak have always beaten the strong.

? In Source B, what point is Mao making about the role of the people in China's economic advance?

Modifying Soviet Marxism

Mao chose deliberately to make this announcement while in Moscow. He admired the Soviet Union for what it had achieved economically. However, he did not enjoy his visits to Moscow and he regretted that the PRC had been so dependent on the Soviet Union since 1949. He was determined to match the Soviet Union's economic achievement but without slavishly following Soviet methods. He later explained why he had chosen to change the policy that the PRC had originally followed. He said (Source C) that in the early days of the PRC:

SOURCE C

From Mao's address at a Work Conference, 30 January 1962, quoted in Stuart Schram, editor, *Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed*, Penguin, 1974, p. 178.

The situation was such that, since we had no experience in economic construction, we had no alternative but to copy the Soviet Union. In the field of heavy industry especially, we copied almost everything from the Soviet Union.

? According to Mao in Source C, why had the PRC initially copied the Soviet Union's industrial methods?

At that time it was absolutely necessary to act thus, but at the same time it was a weakness – a lack of creativity and lack of ability to stand on our own feet. Naturally this could not be our long-term strategy. From 1958 we decided to make self-reliance our major policy.

Mass effort

Mao resolved to achieve industrial **'lift-off'** for China by harnessing what he regarded as the nation's greatest resource: its massive population. Mao's conviction was that the Chinese people could achieve two great advances:

- First, the collectivised peasants, working in their communes, would produce a surplus of food that could be sold abroad to raise money for the expansion of Chinese industry.
- Second, the workers would create, literally with their own hands, a modern industrial economy, powerful enough to compete with the Soviet Union and the capitalist West.

Mao assumed that, simply by an effort of will by the people, the increases in output made under the first Five-Year Plan could be vastly increased. The emphasis was on heavy industry and large projects. Mao, like Stalin, was greatly impressed by the grand project. Size mattered. It was the scale of a construction that appealed to him. He was convinced that by sheer manpower China could solve all the problems of industrial development. It is certainly true that prodigious feats were achieved by manual labour alone during the Great Leap Forward. Mechanical diggers were shunned in favour of the earth being moved by the hands of the workers. Giant span bridges, canals and dams were constructed. These were lauded by the CCP as the visible proof of China's resurgence under a correctly interpreted Marxism which made the people the great dynamic of progress.

It became a common sight across China to see thousands of workers, men, women and children, dressed in identical blue uniforms and toiling with only the most rudimentary of tools. The government's propaganda newsreels of the day showed them all gaily smiling and singing as they went about their joyful task of reconstructing China. This was in addition to thousands of prisoners forced to work under the gaze of armed guards. A fitting description was that Mao Zedong had become 'the emperor of the blue ants'.

The second Five-Year Plan, the centrepiece of the Great Leap Forward, was introduced in 1958 in a blaze of propaganda. Yet there was a sense in which the plan was not a plan at all. It was true that targets and quotas were constantly set and reset, but these were not based on sound economic analysis. They were acts of faith in Communist China's ability to produce, not a hard-headed assessment of what was realistically possible. That was why the projected figures were changed so frequently. They were usually revised upwards by officials eager to impress Mao that they were responding to his call for mass collective

KEY TERM

'Lift-off' Increasing output and production at such a pace as to turn China into a modern industrial power.

effort. A finance minister admitted how disorganised the whole thing was when he said in 1958, 'At present the central authorities are compiling targets for the Second Five-Year Plan, but have not been able to catch up with the swift changes in practical conditions that require upward revision of the targets almost every day.'

'General Steel'

Chinese planners liked to speak figuratively of two great soldiers who would lead the nation to economic victory: 'General Grain' and 'General Steel'. They claimed that just as General Grain was triumphing in the battle to increase China's food supplies, so, too, General Steel would win the struggle to turn China into a successful industrial economy.

KEY TERM

'Backyard furnaces'
Primitive smelting devices that every family was encouraged to build on its premises.

The backyard furnaces

Mao had a belief that simply by producing masses of steel China would somehow solve all its economic problems. The outstanding expression of this was his insistence on the construction of **'backyard furnaces'**. China would draw its supplies of iron and steel not only from large foundries and mills but from small family kilns.

? Why were so many people so willing to join in the production of steel in a localised way as shown in Source D?

Here was a communal activity in which all the Chinese could participate, conscious that by their own efforts they were helping to build the new society. Everybody, peasants as well as workers, young children and old people, could be involved. Enthusiasm, not skill, was the basic requirement. People would

SOURCE D



Backyard furnaces: scenes such as these were widespread across China.

develop successful techniques as they went along. It would be a glorious example of 'learning by doing'. At Mao's command, the Chinese rushed to build their little furnaces. It became a national movement. The sky at night was reddened by the flames of millions of kilns. In daytime, large areas of China were covered by a pall of smoke that sometimes obscured the noonday sun.

Roderick MacFarquar, a celebrated British writer on Chinese affairs who was then living in Beijing, described the 'seething, clattering frenzy' that had overtaken China. 'People carried baskets of ore, people stoked, people goaded buffalo carts, people tipped cauldrons of white-hot metal, people stood on rickety ladders and peered into furnaces, people wheeled barrows of crude steel.'

Weakness of the campaign

Popular enthusiasm did not mean industrial success. Goodwill did not necessarily produce good steel. The only steel suitable for industrial use came from the large foundries. The homemade variety was worthless. Most of it was not steel in any recognisable sense. Smelted from such domestic oddments as pots, pans and bicycles, 'the people's steel' ended up as large, hard, unusable blobs. The authorities knew this, but they went on pretending. The steel continued to be regularly gathered from beaming peasants by beaming collectors, who drove it away and dumped it into deep pits which were then covered over.

State-owned enterprises (SOEs)

An important feature of the Great Leap Forward was the creation of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). This was an attempt to bring industry under total government direction. Existing firms and companies could no longer operate as private, profit-making concerns. Instead, they would work for the state as designated SOEs. The workers could no longer bargain with employers over rates of pay and conditions. Prices, output targets and wages were to be fixed by the state.

Failings of SOEs

In theory, the SOEs fulfilled the Communist notion of centrally-controlled industry. But in practice, they performed less well than anticipated. This was because they were basically inefficient, largely as a result of their abandoning any idea of incentives. Under the new system, the SOEs were given state subsidies and the workers received guaranteed wages. This destroyed any motive for managers to show initiative. Similarly, no matter how conscientious or idle a worker was, he still received the same pay.

Benefits for the workers

In performance terms, the system was stultifying; it took away any sense of endeavour. However, for the workers, the positive side of the system was that they had an **'iron rice bowl'**, the Chinese term for a secure job for life.

KEY TERM

'Iron rice bowl' The system that provided workers with a guaranteed job and protected their wages.

Moreover, the SOEs also provided the workers with accommodation and medical and educational benefits for their families.

Production under the Great Leap Forward

As Table 7.3 shows, there were some apparently impressive increases in output.

Table 7.3 Industrial output under the Great Leap Forward

Industrial production	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964
Coal (millions of tonnes)	131	230	290	270	180	180	190	200
Steel (millions of tonnes)	5.4	8.0	10.0	13.0	8.0	8.0	9.0	10
Oil (millions of tonnes)	1.5	2.3	3.7	4.5	4.5	5.3	5.9	7.0
Chemical fertilisers (millions of tonnes)	0.8	1.4	2.0	2.5	1.4	2.1	3.0	3.6
Cotton cloth (billions of metres)	5.0	5.7	7.5	6.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.0

The picture is one of an initial expansion up to 1960 and then a serious falling away in production in the early 1960s. Moreover, although some of the figures appear impressive, they relate only to the production of materials. They do not reveal how the materials were then used. The fact is that there was no integrated plan for turning what had been produced into sellable manufactured goods. A crippling weakness was that China lacked the following essentials:

- technical skills
- managerial know-how
- efficiently run factories and plants
- an adequate transport system.

Without these, China could not build the modern economy that Mao had promised would overtake the world in a great leap. The failure is evident in Table 7.4. Instead of growing under the Great Leap Forward, the output of industrially produced goods actually fell.

Table 7.4 Production of manufactured goods

To an index of 100	1959	1960	1961	1962
Light industrial	100	91.2	78.4	70.0
Heavy industrial	100	90.0	66.4	44.2

SOURCE E



Workers constructing a dam in 1958.

How does the photo in Source E illustrate the notion of Mao Zedong as 'emperor of the blue ants'?

The limitations of the Great Leap Forward

Many of the communal endeavours that took place under the Great Leap Forward thrilled the Chinese and impressed foreigners, but the plan as a whole did not reach its objective of laying the basis of a modern industrial economy. Among the explanations for this were:

- The quality of finished products fell short of China's industrial needs.
- Political interference made the plan impossible to manage purely as an economic enterprise.
- Officials issued demands and threats but provided few detailed instructions as to how things were actually to be done.
- Despite the setting up of SOEs, so much was left to local initiative that China never operated an integrated national plan.
- The result was that effective organisation and **quality control** became difficult to achieve.
- In 1960, the USSR withdrew technical assistance, which resulted in the closure of half the 300 industrial plants that the Soviet Union had sponsored in China.

KEY TERM

Quality control
The monitoring of industrial production so that items meet a set standard.

Mao's limitations as an economic planner

The Great Leap Forward may be regarded as a magnificent absurdity: magnificent in its faith in mass human potential, absurd in its disregard of economic realities. Mao's economic strategy proved to be flawed and

misconceived. He did not understand the industrial process. He was convinced that by relying on China's unlimited manpower he could bring about the same advances that the Western industrial nations had made. He mistakenly believed that simply by a massive deployment of manpower China could achieve advanced industrialisation.

In no sense was Mao qualified as an economic planner. He admitted as much: 'I only understand social sciences but not natural sciences.' His experience as a political revolutionary and military strategist had not prepared him for the task of shaping the economy of a vast nation. His approach was necessarily a series of intuitive leaps. The result was that his Five-Year Plans wasted rather than exploited China's vast natural and human resources.

4 The economy: agriculture

▶ *Why did Mao introduce collectivisation and with what consequences?*

The second of Mao's 'walking legs' was agriculture. The land policy he adopted has to be seen as a complement to his industrialisation plans.

Collectivisation

Although Mao had gained his reputation as leader of a great peasant revolution, for him the industrialisation programme had priority over all other considerations. By the mid-1950s, the organisers of the first Five-Year Plan had become aware that China had a severe labour shortage; those employed in industry were still only a minority of the Chinese working population. The industrial workforce would have to be greatly enlarged if targets were to be met.

There was also the problem that, although the peasants were undoubtedly producing more food, this was not finding its way to the urban workers. The common view among the economic planners was that it was the fault of the peasants: they were indulging themselves by overeating and by having larger families which meant more mouths had to be fed. Mao often became impatient with what he regarded as peasant obstinacy. In 1953, he urged his officials: 'Educate peasants to eat less, and have more thin **gruel**. The State should try its hardest to prevent peasants eating too much.' It was to resolve these problems and make the land serve the needs of industry that Mao adopted a policy of collectivisation.

Mao's initial land reforms of the early 1950s had been introduced in the excitement accompanying the 1949 Revolution. The land had been seized from the landlords and given to the peasants. Yet, even at that time, the peasants had been urged to pool their resources by joining in farm **collectives**. This

KEY TERMS

Gruel A thin, watery porridge made without milk.

Collectives Areas where the peasants farmed communally rather than for themselves individually.

was the principle that was now forcibly extended. Between 1956 and 1958, the government directed that the existing 750,000 collectives be amalgamated into a number of large **communes**. In 1958, Mao made this collectivisation process an essential part of the Great Leap Forward:

- The 750,000 collectives were merged into 26,000 communes.
- The communes collectively contained 120 million households (an average household having five members).
- The whole system was under the direct control of the central government; farming methods, the sale and distribution of produce, and the setting of prices were to be dictated from above.
- Private farming was ended.
- The peasants needed internal passports to pass from one commune to another.

In public, Mao maintained that collectivisation, far from being forced on the peasants, was a direct response to their wishes. In the summer of 1958, the CCP's Central Committee declared in Mao's name that 'The people have taken to organizing themselves along military lines leading toward a happier collective life and further fostering ideas of collectivism among the peasant masses.'

The CCP's claim was false. Collectivisation had been imposed on the Chinese peasantry as part of a massive social experiment in which the wishes of the peasants themselves were simply ignored. What is extraordinary about Mao is that, although he was himself a peasant and had led a great peasant revolution, he had a very low opinion of the class from which he came. In 1959, he declared to a group of government ministers: 'Peasants are hiding food and are very bad. There is no Communist spirit in them! Peasants are after all peasants. That's the only way they can behave.' His disregard for the ordinary people of China was to have disastrous consequences.

KEY TERMS

Communes Organised regions where the collectives were grouped together.

Agronomists Experts in agricultural science.

China's great famine 1958–62

The collectivisation programme that began in 1958 entailed a vast social transformation which resulted in a famine of unprecedented severity. The disruption caused by the ending of private farming was a major cause of hunger since it discouraged peasants from producing food beyond their own immediate needs. But that was only part of the story. Equally significant was Mao's belief that Chinese **agronomists** had made a series of discoveries about crop growing that would revolutionise food production.

KEY FIGURE

Trofim Lysenko (1898–1976)

A pseudo-scientist whose fraudulent crop-growing theories became standard thinking in the Soviet Union because Stalin trusted and supported him as a model exponent of 'socialist science'.

Lysenkoism

Chinese scientists were tragically influenced by the theories of **Trofim Lysenko**, a Soviet scientist, who claimed to have developed techniques that resulted in crops, such as rice and wheat, yielding up to sixteen times more food than under traditional methods. It was later realised and admitted that Lysenko's 'super-crop' theories were wholly worthless. But so strong was the influence of

the USSR in the early years of the PRC that Chinese agricultural researchers were taught that Lysenko was infallible. A Beijing doctor recorded: 'We were told that the Soviets had discovered and invented everything; we had to change textbooks and rename things in Lysenko's honour.'

KEY TERM

Lysenkoism The fraudulent theories of the Soviet agronomist Trofim Lysenko.

Mao made **Lysenkoism** official policy in 1958 when he personally drafted an eight-point agricultural 'constitution' based on the theories of crop growth advanced by Lysenko, which farmers were forced to follow. The eight headings were:

- use new breeds and seeds
- plant closely
- plough deeply
- increase fertilisation
- use new farm tools
- improve field management
- control pests
- increase irrigation.

Taken separately, these instructions might have had value. But the demand that all the instructions be applied universally, regardless of the type of crop or of the soil and climate of the region, destroyed whatever benefits they might have brought if applied intelligently. Across China, crops withered in the field.

'Sparrowcide'

The most vivid example of the tragic results that followed from the application of Mao's 'socialist science' was in regard to pest control. The entire Chinese people were called on to end the menace of sparrows and other wild birds which ate crop seeds. So, at prescribed times, the Chinese came out from their houses and, with any implement they could lay their hands on, made as much noise as possible. Clanging plates, pots and pans, they kept up a continuous din that prevented the birds from landing, so that they eventually dropped exhausted from the sky. The thousands of dead birds were then publicly displayed as trophies. Villages and regions competed with each other over who could kill the most.

The outcome was catastrophic. With no birds now to thin their numbers, insects and small creatures gorged themselves on the grains and plants. The larger birds that would have fed off the smaller ones were no longer around to prey on rats and their kind. Vermin multiplied and destroyed stocks of grain. The absurdity of the enterprise became only too evident in the hunger that followed.

Starvation

The bewildered local peasant communities, whose way of life had already been dislocated by collectivisation, had no means of preventing the famine that followed. They became defeatist in the face of impending doom. Those peasants

who tried to ignore the new regulations and carry on with their old ways of farming were imprisoned as 'rightists'. The bare statistics of the famine are shown in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 China's agricultural record 1952–62

Year	Grain production (millions of tonnes)	Meat production (millions of tonnes)
1952	163.9	3.4
1953	166.8	3.8
1954	169.5	3.9
1955	183.9	3.3
1956	192.8	3.4
1957	195.1	4.0
1958	200.0	4.3
1959	170.0	2.6
1960	143.5	1.3
1961	147.5	1.2
1962	160.0	1.9

The figures show a marked reduction in food production from 1958 onwards, the years of the famine. Although the decline does not look especially dramatic, it has to be emphasised that the figures refer to China overall; the food shortages were much more severe in the provinces of central China. Nearly every province in China was affected by the famine, but the greatest suffering occurred in central and eastern China. Of the 50 million who died throughout China, the worst death toll was in a great arc of misery that swept through China's rural provinces from Shandong in the east to Tibet in the west:

- Shandong – 7.5 million
- Anhui – 8 million
- Henan – 7.8 million
- Sichuan – 9 million
- Qinghai – 1 million
- Tibet – 1 million.

Hebei and Xinjiang were other areas that experienced terrible suffering. Parents sold their children, and husbands their wives, for food. Women prostituted themselves to obtain food for their families, and there were many instances of peasants offering themselves as slaves to anyone who would supply them with food. Cannibalism occurred in a number of provinces.

The famine in Tibet

Relative to the size of its population, Tibet was the province that suffered most during the famine. A quarter of its 4 million people were wiped out. This figure becomes even more disturbing when it is realised that the death toll was intended. The famine in Tibet was a man-made disaster, an act of **genocide** by the Chinese government.

KEY TERM

Genocide The deliberate destruction of a people or ethnic group.

Since 1950, when the PLA had imposed 'reunification' on Tibet (see page 130), Chinese occupiers had engaged in the systematic destruction of the cultural, social and religious identity of Tibet. Despite the pressure it came under, Tibetan resistance survived as an underground movement to re-emerge in 1959 in a national rising against the Chinese occupation. The Chinese authorities responded by sending in PLA units to suppress the demonstrations.

What gave the Tibetan Rising in 1959 a fearful twist was that it coincided with the development of famine across China. In one of its most ruthless acts, the PRC chose deliberately to extend the famine to Tibet. There was no reason in nature for the famine that ravaged Tibet between 1959 and 1962 to have occurred at all. It happened because the Chinese made it happen. The famine that took hold elsewhere in China in 1958 was spread to Tibet by the authorities as part of their programme for destroying Tibetan resistance.

Traditional Tibetan farming had two main forms: the growing of barley and oats by farmers and the rearing of yaks and sheep by nomadic herders. For centuries this had been sufficient to meet Tibet's needs. However, the Chinese occupiers demanded that 'the communal and socialist farming techniques created by Chairman Mao' now be adopted in Tibet. The farmers were forbidden to grow barley, which provided the staple Tibetan diet, and instructed to sow wheat and maize instead. Since neither crop was suited to the local soil or climate, the order led to the destruction of Tibet's arable food production. This assault on the traditional methods of the crop farmers was matched by the destruction of the way of life of Tibet's ***Khampas***, who were forbidden to roam the pasture lands with their yak herds. Instead, they were told that they were not nomads now but farmers and were forced to live with their herds in communes. The result was the emaciation of the animals and the starvation of the Tibetans.

KEY TERM

Khampas The nomadic herdsmen of Tibet.

A conspiracy of silence

What deepened the tragedy of the famine in China was that government advisers were well aware of the facts. They knew that Lysenkoism was destructive nonsense and that people were dying by the million, but they dared not speak out. Indeed, the reverse happened: cadres and officials reported back to Beijing that the production targets of the Great Leap Forward were being exceeded. Sir Percy Craddock, British ambassador in China in the 1960s, described how provincial leaders 'cooked the books', pretending their region had witnessed immense increases when in reality the people were starving. To impress Mao and suggest abundant growth, it was known for crops to be lifted from the fields and massed together alongside the railway track along which Mao's special train travelled. After Mao had passed through, the crops were returned to their original fields.

Mao's responsibility for the famine in China

So devastating was the famine in Tibet and the other provinces that eventually Mao came to accept that it was happening. But his characteristic reaction

was to refuse to acknowledge that the disaster was a result of his policies of collectivisation and applied socialist science. Instead of taking the blame on himself, Mao put the famine down to three factors:

- the hoarding of grain by the peasants
- the mistakes by local officials
- the exceptionally bad weather of the years 1958–61.

There was no truth in the first of Mao's explanations, some in the second, and a little in the third. But poor weather does not explain the famine. The starvation of the Chinese people was not a natural misfortune; it was a direct consequence of Mao's decisions. The CCP conference at Lushan provided the evidence for this.

The Lushan Conference 1959

Officially, this party gathering had been summoned in order to consider the progress of the Great Leap Forward, but all the delegates knew that it had been convened by the party desperate to find ways to limit the spreading hunger. The question was whether the members would face reality and speak the truth. The answer soon came – they would not. The refusal of those at the top to tell the truth was one of the great betrayals of the Chinese people. Nor can it be said that they were denied the opportunity. One of the first speakers was Peng Dehuai (see page 112), who fearlessly recounted what he had witnessed on his journey through his own native province of Anhui: 'I saw my people lying dead and dying in the fields and by the roadside.' Here was the moment for the others to back him by confirming the truth of what he had described. But none did.

Unwilling to offend Mao, the delegates denounced Peng as a troublemaker and dismissed his eyewitness account as a fabrication. They then proceeded to make speeches noting the advances made under the Great Leap Forward and praising Mao for his inspired leadership. Zhou Enlai was so dismayed by the tone of the conference and so ashamed of his own silence that he stopped attending the sessions. Full of remorse, he hid away in his hotel room and drank himself into a stupor.

Mao's suppression of criticism

In an angry speech, Mao ridiculed Peng Dehuai and told the applauding delegates that he was prepared to use the PLA against any in the party who tried 'to lead the peasants to overthrow the government'. The delegates took this as Mao's way of saying that the supposed famine was really a fiction created by those reactionary peasants who were resisting collectivisation. What Mao had done was to declare that to talk of famine was tantamount to treason against him and the party. It was an unscrupulous move on his part but a clever one, and it worked. Faced with Mao's fierce determination, the party members dropped all thought of serious opposition. The tragedy was that since Mao had declared, in effect, that the famine did not exist, it followed that little could be done in an official, organised way to relieve it.

5 Social change under Mao

What were the major social developments that occurred under Mao?

The social changes that China witnessed during Mao's leadership of China were no less significant than those in the economy.

KEY TERMS

Female emancipation The lifting of all social and economic restrictions on women.

Concubinage The practice of men keeping women not as wives but as mistresses (concubines).

Mao and women

As a young man, Mao Zedong had been a committed advocate of **female emancipation** and, notwithstanding the complaints from feminists about the way women were unfairly treated in the Yanan soviet (see page 88), it was to be expected that he would back measures to help women once he was in power. Mao's attitude suggested that he was a firm believer in women's rights. It was certainly the case that Mao officially accepted the principle of female equality The party under him formally outlawed the practice of foot-binding which had survived in parts of China until the 1940s (see page 5).

Marriage reform under Mao in the 1950s

One of the first acts of the PRC was to introduce a new marriage law in 1950. This laid down that:

- Arranged marriages were to be discontinued.
- **Concubinage** was abolished.
- The paying of the bride-price was forbidden.
- Women (and men) who had previously been forced to marry were entitled to divorce their partners.
- Husbands could not insist on their wives having bound feet.
- All marriages had to be officially recorded and registered.

Many women used their new freedom to divorce and remarry. There were cases of women taking as many as four different husbands in as many years. This threatened to prove so disruptive that a special clause was added to PLA regulations giving the soldiers the legal right to overrule their wives' plea for a divorce.

The impact of collectivisation on women

Further laws were passed in the 1950s giving women the right to own and sell land and property. In the land redistribution which followed the seizure of the properties of the landlords (see page 172), women were actually granted land in their own name. This seemed to be a major advance since it broke the tradition whereby all property dealings had been controlled by the men in the family. However, much of this apparent gain was undermined by the collectivisation programme, which ended the holding of private property by either men or women and required people to live in communes.

Gains and losses

Interestingly, life in the communes did bring women one immediate advantage. Since the rule now was that everybody should eat in common in mess halls, women no longer had the daily drudgery of finding food and preparing it for the family. Yet, for every gain that women made, there seemed to be an accompanying disadvantage. Now that they were officially regarded in Mao's China as the equals of men, they could be called on to do the work of men. Between 1949 and 1966, the proportion of women in the workforce rose from 8 to 29 per cent. This brought women advantages if the work was suitable, but if it was heavy or dangerous physical labour, they were worse off than before.

Ingrained prejudice against women

The hard truth was that social values and attitudes could not be easily changed. China was by deep-seated tradition a patriarchal society; no matter how sincere the new Communist regime might be in declaring that the sexes were equal, women were still having to compete with Chinese ingrained notions of their inferiority. This was clearly evident in the common prejudice against female babies. It was the wish of nearly all Chinese couples to have male children. This derived from a mixture of pride and economic interest. The birth of a boy was thought to bring honour on the family, and the promise of another source of income; girls were seen as a drain on resources.

Unchanging peasant attitudes

Peasants complained that the new marriage laws interfered with the established ways of life. The idea of female subordination was persistent in all China's rural areas but especially so in the western provinces where there was a predominantly Muslim culture. In areas such as Xinjiang, families were tightly controlled by the men; female members were subject to the orders of husbands, fathers and brothers, and even brothers-in-law, and were likely to be punished if they showed too much independence of thought. The representative of the All China Women's Federation described the outlook of Xinjiang's 4 million women as being like a frog in a well: 'All they can see is a tiny bit of sky, so their outlook is very narrow. A woman is treated as a man's possession. It is the duty of a woman to look after him.'

CCP restrictions on women

There is also the consideration that, as had been observed at Yanan in the 1930s, the Communist authorities may not have been as committed to gender equality as they claimed. **Soong Qingling**, one of the few women to hold a high position in the PRC government under Mao, later complained that her party colleagues did not really treat her as an equal and did not accept that women comrades could play key roles in government and party. During Mao's time, women made up only thirteen per cent of the membership of the Communist Party. The number of women who became members of the National People's Congress did

KEY FIGURE

Soong Qingling (1893–1981)

One of a remarkable set of sisters who became prominent in Chinese politics, Soong had been the wife of the Nationalist leader, Sun Yatsen, while her sister, Meiling, was married to Mao's great rival, Jiang Jieshi.

rise during Mao's period of power, but never on such a scale as to suggest that the CCP had made a priority of promoting females within its ranks.

Women and the family

Table 7.6 The percentage of women deputies in the National People's Congress

Year	Percentage
1954	14%
1959	14%
1964	17%
1975	23%

In addition to denying women a fuller political role, there was a deeper sense in which Mao's reforms prevented them from making a sustained advance in their status. If anything, the radical character of the reforms increased women's vulnerability. This was glaringly evident in regard to collectivisation, which entailed a direct and deliberate assault on the traditional Chinese family. Mao had already prepared the way for this as early as 1944 when he had stated that 'It is necessary to destroy the peasant family; women going to the factories and joining the army are part of the big destruction of the family.' The prohibiting of ancestor worship, which was part of the attack on religion (see page 183), was intended as a blow against the family as a social unit with its historical roots and deep emotional attachments.

No matter how much women wanted emancipation, few of them felt happy that their role as mothers and raisers of families was now to be written off as no longer being necessary. It went against nature. So determined was the CCP to undermine the family that in many of the communes, men and women had to live in separate quarters and were allowed to meet only for **conjugal visits**. An official party statement of 1958 left no doubts over the purpose of such restrictions: 'It is not the family, but Chairman Mao and the Communist Party, which has given us everything. Personal love is not important.'

KEY TERM

Conjugal visits Time set aside for married couples to be intimate.

While in some respects this was liberating, since women were freed from restrictive family ties, there was a downside to it. The enforced social change had happened too suddenly. The Chinese, a profoundly conservative people, became disorientated; women found themselves detached from their traditional moorings. The famine that struck so many parts of China in the wake of the Great Leap Forward deepened this sense of disorientation. It was women who suffered most in the famine that devastated China between 1958 and 1962; they found themselves caught in a tragedy that simply overwhelmed them. Circumstances made it impossible for them to remain the providers for their children.

Divorce and wife-selling

The impossibility of maintaining a normal married life in such circumstances was reflected in the divorce figures during the famine period. In Gansu province, for example, the divorce rate rose by 60 per cent. This did not always denote a breakdown of personal relationships, but rather that as the family ran out of food the couple judged it better for the wife to look for a husband elsewhere. Her starving family would at least have the little bit of food that she would have eaten had she stayed. As one report stated: 'The poorer the region, the more wife selling there was. If the chief family earner died, a teenage

daughter might be sold to the highest bidder in a distant place to obtain grain to keep the rest of the household alive.'

The lasting family disruption that wife-selling had often caused became clear after the famine had eased by the mid-1960s. Wives who had been sold often refused to go back to their original husbands, preferring the new life they had made. In Hebei, Sichuan and Gansu provinces, there was a stream of court cases in which husbands appealed for decisions that would return their former wives to them. In most instances the courts found for the husbands but this was by no means guaranteed. A number of women resisted being forced to return and were supported by the courts.

Consequences for children

One of the tragic consequences of the wives' leaving home was that the children of the family were left motherless. This often led to their being sold or abandoned. Youngsters who were old enough to be useful were sold as workers, slaves, in effect. But at least such children had a chance of survival. It was the very young who suffered most from being deserted. A nurse in Lanzuo, the main city in Gansu, described how on a hospital stairway she came across a tattered cardboard box; inside this crude manger lay a baby girl. Pinned to the dirty rags in which she was dressed was a roughly pencilled note: 'To kind-hearted people, please look after her. From a mother who regrets her faults.'

At first, it was girl infants who were dumped in hospitals, at railway stations, or simply by the roadside, but as the famine grew worse boys, too, were abandoned.

Child abuse and prostitution

Abandoned children were obvious targets for exploitation and sexual abuse. One example was a predatory party official in Hefei who bought a young girl from a starving family and proceeded to make her his sexual plaything. His behaviour was too much even for a party that was used to covering up its members' scandals and he was dismissed. The party was also involved in the spread of prostitution which, like wife-selling, became more widespread as the famine bit deeper. In the worst-hit regions, women openly offered themselves for sex in return for food. Using the opportunity for exploitation that this provided, CCP workers in Anhui set up a series of brothels reserved for special use by party members.

Birth control

Mao had earlier encouraged the people to have large families, his belief being that industrialisation, based on mass effort, required an ever-growing population. However, the grim experience of the famine suggested that China had too many mouths to feed. In 1963, therefore, the PRC formally introduced a campaign aimed at cutting the birth rate. A Birth Control Bureau was set up to

organise this. Teams of medical workers were sent into the countryside to urge wives to use effective contraceptives and husbands to be sterilised.

The Bureau had only limited success. The idea of family limitation met strong resistance from the peasants, for whom having large numbers of children was traditionally a matter of pride and good fortune. There was also the long-established peasant view that rather than being a drain on resources, children were a source of future family income and a guarantee of care for parents in old age. In the face of this natural conservatism, the health workers were often reluctant or half-hearted in preaching the new ways. It would be some time before the Chinese authorities felt able to go so far as to impose a one-child policy.

Education and the young

The education plans of the PRC began with high hopes for raising the educational levels of the Chinese people. In 1949, the majority of the peasants were illiterate or barely literate. They could read a little but write almost nothing. It had been one of Mao's contentions that, under communism, China would see a major spread of education among the people and a sharp decrease in illiteracy. He kept his word. By the mid-1950s, a national system of primary education had been set up; its success is evident from the figures in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7 Literacy rates (percentage of Chinese with basic reading and writing skills)

Year	Percentage
1949	20%
1960	50%
1964	66%
1976	70%

Language reform

One fascinating aspect of this was the reform of the Chinese language introduced by the PRC. In 1955, a new form of Mandarin, the language of 80 per cent of the Chinese people, was adopted. Up to that date there had been no standardised form of written Mandarin that everybody could understand. This was because of two factors:

- The pronunciation of Mandarin varied widely from area to area; visitors from one place often could not be understood by speakers in another.
- Mandarin had no alphabet. Whereas all the words in every European language are made up from a basic alphabet (English, for example, has 26 letters), written Mandarin was made up of **ideograms**, not letters. This made writing Mandarin extremely difficult, since all its words had to be learned separately.

To solve the problem, the PRC promoted a written form of Mandarin that all speakers and writers of it could recognise and use. The result was the adoption of ***Pinyin***: in this, all the sounds in Mandarin were given a particular symbol. This greatly eased the learning process since all Mandarin speakers could now express the words they said in a standardised, recognisable written form. The following is an example:

- Mandarin Chinese: 三个孩子都上学
- *Pinyin*: sān gè háizi dōu shangxué
- English: all three children go to school.

KEY TERMS

Ideograms Literally pictures; Mandarin symbols had begun as pictures of the ideas they described.

Pinyin A modernised form of Mandarin.

Such initiatives saw major advances in Chinese education by the mid-1960s. One striking statistic is that in 1949 there were 200 colleges and universities in China; by 1961, that number had grown to 1289. The tragedy was to come after 1965, when the Cultural Revolution practically destroyed education as a public activity (see page 219).

Religion in the PRC

As Marxists, the Chinese Communists considered religious belief and worship to be superstitions that throughout history had been deliberately cultivated by the governing classes to suppress the masses. Religion, with its promise of eternal happiness in the afterlife, was a powerful force persuading the workers to put up with their grim lives without protest; the more they suffered on earth, the greater would be their reward in heaven. Mao Zedong had declared that religion was poison and had compared the Christian missionaries in China to the Nazis in Europe. Almost immediately after he led his party to power, the attack on religion began. The official rationale was that since the workers were now in power there was no longer any reason for religion to exist; the triumph of the workers had ended the need for such escapism. For religion to continue openly would be an affront to the new Chinese Communist world. Religious worship had now to be replaced by loyalty to the CCP and the state.

State attacks on religion

Suppression took an organised form:

- Christian churches were forcibly closed.
- Church property was seized or destroyed.
- Clergy were denounced and physically abused.
- Foreign priests and nuns were expelled from China.

Wall posters, the standard way by which Chinese governments spread their propaganda, and loudspeakers at every corner, kept up a running condemnation of religion and those who practised it. Confucianism, **Buddhism** and Christianity were denounced as worthless superstitions that had no place in the new nation. Slogans proclaiming the virtues of the new Maoist China were to be seen everywhere. China became a slogan-ridden society, with the slogans being a means of enforcing solidarity and conformity.

KEY TERM

Buddhism An ancient oriental philosophy, which laid great stress on the individual gaining enlightenment through meditation.

Peasant religion suppressed

The peasants, the largest and most religious segment of China's population, were the first to be targeted. Beginning in 1950, a campaign was launched to eliminate all traces of religion from their lives. The Chinese traditional faiths, Buddhism and Confucianism, were forbidden to be openly practised, as were the major foreign religions, Christianity and Islam. Priests and monks were prohibited under pain of imprisonment from wearing their distinctive dress. Foreign clergy were expelled from China, and temples, churches, shrines and

monasteries were closed down or turned into offices and public buildings. Ancestor worship (see page 24) was also condemned as a superstition that was no longer acceptable in the new China.

The patriotic churches

Mao and the authorities were shrewd enough to realise that, if they permitted some forms of public worship to continue, it would give the appearance of toleration. It was laid down that some churches could remain open provided that they 'did not endanger the security of the state'. What this meant in practice was they became state controlled. Known as the 'patriotic churches', their clergy had to profess open support for the Communist regime and accept that the authorities had the right to dictate doctrine and appoint clergy.

One consequence of the state sponsoring of the patriotic churches was a sharpening of conflict between the PRC and the **Vatican**. The persecution of the Catholic Church in Mao's China, which involved the seizure and closure of churches and chapels and the imprisonment or expulsion of priests and nuns, was condemned by the **papacy**, which made a particular point of rejecting the notion of the 'patriotic church' as a genuine form of Catholicism. Bishops and priests appointed by the Chinese state would not be recognised by Rome and risked **excommunication**. In 2016, the dispute between Beijing and Rome over this issue had still not been resolved.

KEY TERMS

Vatican The administrative centre of the Catholic Church in Rome, where the pope has his official residence.

Papacy The Catholic Church's system of government, headed by the pope.

Excommunication Formal dismissal from the Catholic Church.

Agit-prop Short for 'agitation propaganda', the teaching of political ideas through entertainment.

Chinese customs suppressed

Suppression was not restricted to religious belief. The customs and rituals that had helped to shape the life of the peasants were proscribed. These included the songs and dances they had performed at weddings and festivals, the chants that had accompanied their work in the fields, and the sagas and narratives with which wandering poets had entertained whole villages. These traditional ways were replaced with political meetings and discussions organised by the party. The huge social experiment of collectivisation which Mao introduced in 1950s was meant to destroy the time-honoured pattern of rural life.

The peasants were now expected to embrace Maoism as their new faith. Troupes of **agit-prop** performers toured the countryside putting on shows and plays which the villagers were required to sit through. The shows were performed in halls and public spaces. Sometimes the players arrived in brightly painted trucks carrying slogans and images extolling the wonders and benefits of the new Maoist world. The sides of the truck could serve as a screen on which propaganda films were projected after dark or they could be removed to convert the truck into a stage.

Propaganda

The message of the films and the live performances was always the same: the old days of cruel landlords and abused peasant farmers had been replaced with a communal way of life in which the peasants, guided by the wisdom of Mao and the CCP, had entered an era of happy collective endeavour and achievement. The shows were played at knockabout pantomime level; the baddies were always bad, the goodies were always good. The landlords were obviously the worst of the baddies, but scheming Confucian officials and exploiting priests also appeared to be hissed at and jeered.

Chapter summary

After taking power in 1949, Mao employed terror tactics to build a conformist, Communist society. Using 'anti-movements' he stifled criticism of his economic policy. Despite being initially dependent on Soviet economic aid, he was determined to build the PRC's economy to the level where it matched the USSR and the Western powers. Mao embarked on a series of Five-Year Plans. The first, which had begun in 1952, had some successes, but did not fully meet expectations. In a revolutionary economic move, Mao initiated the Great Leap Forward, a programme for achieving industrial growth by relying entirely on Chinese resources. To this end, he began another revolution – the collectivisation of the peasantry – calculating that this would produce surplus food for sale abroad to raise the necessary capital for industrial investment. Not merely did this objective fail, but the upheaval caused by collectivisation produced a widespread destructive famine. In a number of ways, the famine worsened the disruption already caused by Mao's social policies. Women had both gained and lost in status, education had seen significant developments, while religion had been largely suppressed and the traditional ways of the peasants undermined.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. What methods did Mao's government use to extend its political and social control over the PRC?
2. How did democratic centralism operate under Mao?
3. Why was Mao so determined to destroy the middle class?
4. What policies did the new government adopt towards the peasants and landlords?
5. How far did the first Five-Year Plan achieve its objectives?
6. What was the government's aim in introducing state-owned enterprises?
7. What factors prevented the Great Leap Forward from reaching its full targets?
8. What was the aim of collectivisation?
9. What was Mao's adoption of Lysenkoism intended to achieve?
10. How far was the great famine of 1958–62 a man-made disaster?
11. Why was the famine particularly severe in Tibet?
12. What was the significance of the 1959 Lushan Conference?
13. How committed to female emancipation were Mao and the CCP?
14. Why were women particularly vulnerable during the Great Leap Forward and the famine?
15. How did the Communist authorities tackle the question of basic literacy?
16. What measures did the authorities take to suppress religion?
17. How was state propaganda used to undermine traditional ways?

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. How successful were Mao's industrial policies in the years 1952–62?
2. How far do you agree that Mao's agricultural policies in the years 1949–62 were disastrous failures?
3. To what extent did the CCP's social policies change the lives of children and women in the years 1949–76?

CHAPTER 8

The Cultural Revolution 1966–76

Between 1966 and 1976, there occurred one of the most remarkable episodes in Chinese history. For a decade, Mao Zedong's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution convulsed the People's Republic of China (PRC). Why Mao launched this disruptive movement, who implemented it, why it came to an end and what its effects were are the questions which this chapters covers under the following headings:

- ★ Origins: the power struggle 1962–6
- ★ The course of the Cultural Revolution
- ★ The Red Guards
- ★ The PLA and the last stage of the Cultural Revolution
- ★ The effects of the Cultural Revolution

The key debate on *page 223* of this chapter asks the question: Was Mao a monster?

Key dates

1962–6	The power struggle
1966	Mao reappeared in public
	Liu and Deng dismissed
	First Tiananmen Square rally
1966–76	Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution
1967	Hydrogen bomb exploded by Chinese
1967–72	'Up to the mountains and down to the villages' campaign
1968–71	Cleansing the class ranks campaign
1971	Lin Biao killed in plane crash
1972	Criticise Lin Biao and Confucius campaign began
	Nixon's visit to China
1973	Liu Shaoqi died in prison
	Deng Xiaoping brought back into government
1976	Death of Zhou Enlai
	Tiananmen Incident in Beijing
	Death of Mao Zedong

1 Origins: the power struggle 1962–6

What issues underlay the power struggle of the years 1962–6?

The impact of the failure of the Great Leap Forward

Following the failure of the Great Leap Forward, Mao had temporarily withdrawn from direct government, leaving to **Liu Shaoqi** and Deng Xiaoping the task of bringing an end to the rural crisis and restoring adequate food supplies. In tackling the problem, Liu and Deng enlisted the aid of **Chen Yun**. Together, the three men concluded that the only workable solution to the food crisis was to allow private farming and markets to operate again; this would provide the peasant farmers with an incentive to produce surplus stocks.

The reforms that Liu and his colleagues introduced along these lines were an unspoken admission that the commune system had been a failure. What Liu had raised was the central issue of where the People's Republic of China (PRC) was heading and what form socialism should take in the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward and the famine. Unsurprisingly, Mao became uneasy with the methods adopted by Liu and Deng. Their restoration of private ownership of the land undermined the **collectivist principle** on which he had set such store as a Communist revolutionary. He had some grounds for being uneasy; in the early 1960s, in the provinces of Gansu and Qinghai, supporters of Liu and Deng took over the local government and began to reverse the collectivisation programme.

There was also personal pique involved, Mao complaining that Deng and Liu treated him like 'a dead man at his own funeral'. Mao never lost his fear that his colleagues, even those who professed the greatest personal loyalty, were ready to remove him from power if the opportunity came.

The political divisions

For ease of understanding, it is possible to portray the political divide of these years in a visual form in terms of the left–right political spectrum. Figure 8.1 indicates the main groupings in the power struggle that followed Mao's withdrawal from the political centre ground. It should be emphasised that a visual representation cannot capture the shifts and overlaps that occurred. Nevertheless, the diagram does depict the general lines dividing the conflicting elements. In broad definition:

- The left (Maoists) wanted the maintenance of stringent controls and enforcement.
- The right wanted a relaxation of controls and encouragement rather than coercion.
- The centre, an ill-defined group, thought that coercion could be intermixed with a lighter touch depending on particular circumstances.

KEY FIGURES

Liu Shaoqi (1898–1969)
President of the PRC and second in command to Mao until removed during the Cultural Revolution.

Chen Yun (1905–95)
Regarded as the CCP's leading economist.

KEY TERM

Collectivist principle
The Marxist notion that social advance can be achieved only by the proletarian class acting together as a body and not allowing individuals to follow their own interests.

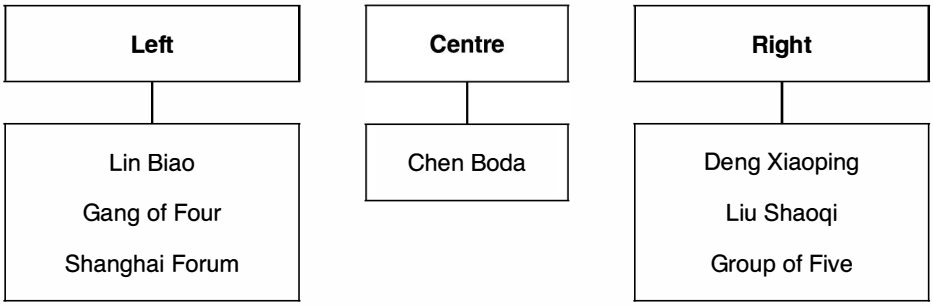


Figure 8.1 The contenders for power 1962–6. (Mao himself, of course, belongs to the left, but it is noteworthy that he said that some Maoists were 'more Maoist' than he was.)

Economic and political issues

At the heart of the divide was the question of economics. How was China to continue to develop its industry? Although it was known that Mao had accepted that the Great Leap Forward had not achieved its aims, hardliners on the left insisted that the harsh methods with which it had been implemented must be maintained. Indeed, there were those prepared to argue that strict control of peasants and workers in accordance with Maoist principles had to be maintained even if this meant slower economic growth. For hardliners, the needs of revolution took precedence over all other considerations. Collectivism and political conformity were not methods for achieving revolution; they were a definition of the revolution, which was synonymous with Maoism. Even when, as now, Mao was apparently not directing policies, he remained the reference point.

Lin Biao and the cult of Mao

A particular reason for Mao's dominance was that at the very time he chose to leave the centre stage, he was being made into a cult. This was the work of Lin Biao. A dedicated follower of Mao, Lin was a field marshal of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and had been defence minister since 1959. He now began to serve his master in a remarkable way. In effect, Lin became Mao's propaganda minister. He made it his task to inculcate the notion that Mao Zedong was the outstanding interpreter of class struggle, the last and the greatest in the line of prophets of revolution that stretched from Marx, by way of Lenin and Stalin, to reach its culmination in him. Lin's aim was to elevate Mao above ordinary politics and put him beyond criticism as the embodiment of wisdom.

The Little Red Book

Lin popularised the concept of Mao as an icon in a propaganda campaign that proved brilliantly successful. Early in the early 1960s, he collaborated with

KEY FIGURE

Chen Boda (1904–89)

A leading Communist intellectual and the editor of the CCP journal, *Red Flag*.

KEY TERM

Secular bible The Little Red Book came to have the same authority in Maoist society as the Bible had in Christian culture or the Koran in Islamic.

Chen Boda in compiling what became known as the Little Red Book. Formally entitled *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*, the book was a collection of the thoughts and sayings of Mao since the 1920s. Encased in bold red plastic covers and printed in handy pocket size, the work was prefaced by Lin's exhortation: 'Study Chairman Mao's writings, follow his teachings and act according to his instructions.'

The Little Red Book, which first appeared in 1964, is best understood as China's **secular bible**, regarded as the source of all truth. Within two years of publication over 740 million copies had been distributed. Under Lin's direction, it became the prescribed source for every subject on the curriculum in the schools and universities. In factories, the workers were uplifted by continual loudspeaker broadcasts of readings of Mao's words. Copies were presented as a precious wedding gift to couples, who were urged to read from it before having sex so that the bride might conceive wise children. The sayings of Confucius had once been invoked to settle legal and social disputes. It was now the thoughts of Chairman Mao that were the ultimate reference.

The PLA

For Mao, the vital feature of all this was the swift adoption of the Little Red Book by the PLA as their inspiration. Lin Biao, as a field marshal of the PLA and head of the armed services, made the book a compulsory and daily part of a soldier's military training. Since the 1920s, Mao had consistently defined the role of the Red Army, and its successor the PLA, as a political one. 'The Chinese Red Army is an armed force for carrying out the political tasks of the revolution. Without a people's army the people have nothing.' In this way the PLA, the institution with the highest prestige and proudest revolutionary tradition in Communist China, was politicised as a force totally committed to the support of Mao Zedong. The special relationship between the chairman and the armed services was a major instrument in projecting the cult of Mao and was to prove of vital importance in the development of the Cultural Revolution.

Attempts to radicalise 1963–4

One particular development that revealed the nature of the divide within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was the creation by Maoists in 1963 of the Socialist Education Movement (SEM). Despite its title, the movement was more concerned with politics than with education. It became a centre of dispute between Mao's concept of Communist planning, which was essentially a restatement of the collectivist ideas that had inspired the Great Leap Forward, and Liu Shaoqi's plan for liberalising agriculture by restoring some element of private farming.

The SEM had begun, with Mao's backing, as another anti-campaign, presented as the 'four clean-ups'. Under the pretence of being sent to learn from the

peasants, government officials and party cadres were despatched to the countryside, tasked with exposing the 'reactionary elements' who had prevented the Great Leap Forward from being fully successful. However, the exposure revealed the opposite of what was intended. Liu Shaoqi, greatly aided by his wife **Wang Guangmei**, had already gone to live among the peasants to gain first-hand knowledge. What Liu and Guang discovered was not lack of effort by ordinary peasants but corruption and collusion between local party bosses and the officials sent to implement the reforms of the Great Leap Forward. 'Cadres in basic level organisations who have made mistakes are usually connected with certain cadres of higher level organisations and are instigated, supported and protected by them.'

KEY FIGURE

Wang Guangmei (1921–2006)

Had earlier worked for a CCP–GMD reconciliation and was eager to gain an understanding of ordinary Chinese; her talents excited the bitter jealousy of Mao's wife, Jiang Qing.

This revelation confirmed Mao's suspicions but also angered him in that it had been Liu who had made the discoveries. In spite of his supposed retirement into the background, Mao was still prepared to intervene when he chose. He summoned Liu for a personal meeting, during which he berated him for using the work of the SEM to undermine the party workers, while ignoring 'peasant capitalists'. 'Though you repeat day after day that there must be democracy, there is no democracy; though you ask others to be democratic, you are not democratic yourselves.' Mao extended his criticism to include Liu's colleague Deng Xiaoping whom he dubbed 'placid' for showing insufficient trust in the masses.

Mao's attitude towards the corruption exposure was a confused one, which is understandable given that he was supposed to have taken a back seat and that he was jealous of Liu and Deng over their impressive economic policies. How successful those policies were was evident from the figures:

- The PRC's budget deficit of 8 billion yuan in 1960 had been turned into a surplus of 1 million yuan by 1962.
- By 1965, agricultural production had been restored to the levels of 1957, before the Great Leap Forward.
- Industrial growth reached twenty per cent by 1965.
- A ten-fold increase in oil production ended the PRC's reliance on Soviet supplies.

Despite, indeed because of, these achievements, the left of the party prepared to attack what they regarded as Liu's and Deng's abandonment of 'proletarian values'. Mao's publicised admonishing of Liu and Deng helped to polarise the situation by giving the left the pretext for being more open and aggressive in their criticism of Liu's 'rightism'. The power struggle intensified.

The Wu Han affair

Believing that their plan to radicalise the party between 1963 and 1964 had been unsuccessful, the Maoists intensified their efforts by exploiting the opportunity to make trouble that had been provided by a dispute over a play, *The Dismissal of*

KEY FIGURE

Wu Han (1909–69)

A playwright, considered by the Maoists to be a spokesman for the reactionary elements in the CCP.

Hai Rui from Office. Written by **Wu Han**, this work, performed between 1961 and 1965, was set in the days of the Song dynasty (AD960–1279) and told the story of Hai Rui, a court official, who was demoted and punished after courageously defying the orders of a tyrannical emperor.

Since Wu Han belonged to a group of writers thought to be critical of Mao Zedong, it was possible to interpret his play as an intended reference to Mao's previous dismissal of Peng Dehuai for opposing the Great Leap Forward and telling the truth about the famine (see page 177). It thus provided Lin Biao with a pretext for moving against the anti-Maoist elements in the CCP. Beginning in 1965, a series of attacks were made on Wu, charging him with blackening Mao's good name and undermining China's Communist revolution. A broken man, Wu Han killed himself four years later.

Divisions in the CCP

The Wu Han affair deepened the divisions that had begun to develop within the CCP and between the CCP and PLA. It was at this stage that Jiang Qing, a former bit-part film actress in Shanghai, began to play a prominent role. As Mao's wife she had an influence that was dangerous to challenge. A fierce hardliner, Jiang denounced the 'reactionaries and revisionists' on the right of the party. She also aimed to undermine the **Group of Five**, whose essential objective was to act as peacemakers to prevent party splits widening. Notwithstanding their declared loyalty to Mao, the Group of Five were condemned by Jiang for their moderation at a time when utter ruthlessness was the only proper response.

KEY TERMS

Group of Five A set of moderate party officials led by Peng Zhen (1902–97), the mayor of Beijing.

Shanghai Forum A group of hardline leftist radicals, who believed in the harshest measures being taken against those who opposed Mao.

Gang of Four Made up of Jiang Qing and her three male associates, Zhang Chunqiao (1917–2001), Yao Wenyuan (1931–2005) and Wang Hongwen (1932–92).

The Shanghai Forum and the Gang of Four

Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, was the dominant figure in the **Shanghai Forum**, a set of Maoists who represented the most hardline element in the CCP. The forum itself was dominated by a group of particularly uncompromising individuals, known as the **Gang of Four**. They were the extreme wing of an extreme movement. The Gang of Four comprised Jiang Qing and three men, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen (see page 194). They were notorious for the ferocity they had shown in rising to prominence in the Shanghai section of the CCP and becoming members of the Politburo.

Jiang urged that steps be immediately taken to remove Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping from their positions in the CCP. She further demanded that Chinese culture should be cleansed of those writers and artists whose attitude betrayed their lack of commitment to Mao's revolution. The severity of her approach so impressed Lin Biao that he asked her to take charge of the PLA's cultural policy.



Jiang Qing

1914	Born in Shandong province
1937	Joined the Communists in Yanan
1939	Married Mao Zedong
1962–6	Led the Gang of Four
1966–76	Controlled the arts during the Cultural Revolution
1976	Arrested after the defeat of the Gang of Four
1981	Put on trial and condemned
1991	Died

Early career

A film actress in Shanghai until the late 1930s, Jiang abandoned her first husband to join the Communists in Yanan. There, she set her cap at Mao, who was so taken with her that he gave up his wife and married Jiang in 1938. They stayed together in a stormy relationship until his death. Initially, Mao restricted Jiang's involvement in politics, but from 1959 onwards, finding her aggressive public style a very useful weapon against his opponents, he encouraged her to play a much bigger part in public affairs.

Political role

An unforgiving woman who bore grudges, and was ferocious in attacking those she believed were deviating from Mao's brand of communism, Jiang was deeply involved in the infighting that preceded the Cultural Revolution, using her links with the Shanghai Forum to become a dominant force. During the Revolution she played a key role as Mao's enforcer in attempting to reshape the whole of Chinese culture. 'I was Mao's dog. Whoever he told me to bite, I bit.'

Significance

Terrifying figure though she was, she was dependent on Mao for the power she wielded. This became clear after Mao's death when she failed to lead the Gang of Four to victory in the power struggle that followed. She was arrested and subjected to a show trial in 1978. Refusing to acknowledge any past political crimes, she was sentenced to death, a penalty that was subsequently reduced to life imprisonment. Jiang died in mysterious circumstances in prison in 1991, the authorities claiming that she had killed herself.

Character of the Gang of Four

The Gang of Four were involved in the Cultural Revolution throughout its course, but a fact worth emphasising is that Jiang and her three associates were never a formal organised bloc. Indeed, there were times when Mao told them to stop acting as if they were. What gave them apparent coherence was the extremism of their views; as hardliners they fought a continuous battle against those in the Politburo they looked on as not being fully committed to uncompromising socialism. For them, the path to socialism that the party was following was too slow. They wanted the pitilessness of the assault on class enemies which had characterised the start of the Cultural Revolution to be constantly maintained. That, they held, was what 'permanent revolution' meant. They pushed Mao's intolerance towards revisionists and class enemies to its ultimate extreme, which was why they were offended by the moderate approach of Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, which they scorned as tantamount to revisionism.

Jiang Jing's associates in the Gang of Four

- Zhang Chunqiao (1917–2005), an ultra-leftist, became notorious in the 1930s as a ruthless political infighter who had clawed his way to the top of the CCP in Shanghai. At Yanan he acted as a propagandist for Mao Zedong. On the PRC's creation in 1949, Zhang returned to Shanghai where he continued his fierce rivalry with party opponents.
- Wang Hongwen (1935–1992) had made his mark as a trade union leader in Shanghai and had earned a fearsome reputation for the viciousness with which he dealt with opponents. He teamed up with Zhang Chunqiao, with whom he formed a Red Guards group that wreaked havoc in Shanghai in the first two years of the Cultural Revolution. As one of Jiang's protégés, he had risen to membership of the Politburo by 1969.
- Yao Wenyuan (1931–2005) established himself a leading party propagandist. Working with Zhang Chunqiao, he crushed the 'rightists' in Shanghai before moving to Beijing where he continued his destructive campaign against radicals who were not radical enough. Elevated to the Politburo, he intensified his criticism of Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. His charge was that in pursuing a moderate political line and seeking economic reform they were ignoring the necessity of 'continuous revolution, and 'class war against the bourgeoisie'.

Asserting that the thoughts of Chairman Mao represented a 'new development of the Marxist–Leninist world outlook', the Gang of Four identified the 'counter-revolutionaries' who must be struggled against. It appealed to the PLA, 'the mainstay and hope of the Chinese people', to lead China in rooting out 'anti-socialist weeds' and eradicating all traces of corruption. Lin Biao spoke of an 'imminent and inevitable' struggle against class enemies. Lin's statement proved to be the beginning of a purge of the party. In April 1966, Peng Zhen and the leading members of the Group of Five were denounced as 'capitalist roaders'.

The Central Cultural Revolution Group

The ground for this attack had been prepared during the preceding twelve months by Maoists **packing** the key party committees. A striking example of this Maoist control had been the setting up in May 1965 of the **Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG)**. This body, which was dominated by the Gang of Four, was the instrument through which Mao would run the Cultural Revolution (see page 195). Such was the influence of the CCRG that by the early summer of 1966, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping found themselves being outmanoeuvred and undermined. Acting on information the CCRG had given him, Mao himself in May 1966 issued a 'Notification' to the CCP in which he defined the enemy within (Source A, see page 195).

KEY TERMS

Packing Controlling the membership of committees in such a way that they always contained a majority of sympathisers.

Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG) A sub-committee of the Politburo, established in May 1965. Its seventeen members included the Gang of Four.

SOURCE A

From Mao's 'Notification', 16 May 1966, in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Foreign Languages Press, volume IV, 1975, p. 205.

Some people in authority are taking the capitalist road. These representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the party, the government, the army and various spheres of culture are actually a bunch of counter-revolutionary revisionists. Once the conditions are ripe, they will try to seize power, turning the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the capitalist class. Some of the people have already been exposed by us; others have not. Some are still trusted by us, and are being groomed as our successors, people of Khrushchev type who are nestling right beside us. Party cadres at all levels must pay attention to this point.

According to Mao in Source A, what crisis does the CCP face?

Mao's reference to Khrushchev was not a cheap insult. He had convinced himself by early 1966 that Soviet revisionism (see page 142) had infected not merely organisations like SEM but the whole of the party and government. Mao's words were, in effect, an announcement that China had entered the tumultuous period of political and social history known as the Cultural Revolution.

2 The course of the Cultural Revolution

▶ *What were Mao's motives in launching the Cultural Revolution?*

The start of the Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution began officially in May 1966 with Mao's announcement of a party purge to be run by the CCRG. However, the event that first brought the Cultural Revolution to the attention of the Chinese people and to the outside world as a great national movement was a mass rally in Tiananmen Square in August. During the intervening months, Lin Biao, acting on Mao's instruction, had organised students in the universities in a wall-poster campaign attacking the education system for its divergence from the revolutionary path. The enthusiasm with which the students abandoned their classes and attacked their teachers caused such unrest that Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi sent special work teams to the campuses in an attempt to contain the trouble.

Zhou Enlai tried to keep the peace between the party factions, between those who wanted to restore order and the Maoist elements who were eager for the disruption to spread. But in an atmosphere of increasing violence his best efforts were in vain. The work teams were attacked by the students who, in a particularly significant development, began to take to the streets as '**Red Guards**' intent on creating a reign of terror (see page 202).

KEY TERM

Red Guards Radical students whose name derived from the red armbands they were given by Lin Biao.

Mao's return

It was at this critical stage that Mao Zedong made a dramatic public reappearance. In July 1966, in a stage-managed extravaganza, he was seen swimming across the Yangzi River at Wuhan, the scene of the 1911 Revolution against the Manchu (see page 53). Photos of this feat filled the Chinese newspapers and television and cinema newsreels carried the pictures into every village.

Mao had made a great symbolic gesture that excited the whole of China. The Yangzi had been carefully chosen as the site of his return to public view. In Chinese tradition, the nation's greatest river was regarded as a life force. The 73-year-old chairman had proved that he was very much alive and, therefore, still in control of events. American scholar John King Fairbank has suggested that to understand the impact of the incident on the Chinese imagination one needs to think of the reaction there would be in Britain to 'the news that Queen Elizabeth II had swum the Channel'.

Mao exploited the adulation aroused by his spectacular return to tighten his grip on government and party. In August, he summoned a special meeting of the CCP's Central Committee, at which he condemned the revisionist tendencies in the party and called on members to rededicate themselves to unwavering class struggle. Mao also announced the downgrading of Liu Shaoqi in the party ranking and the elevation of Lin Biao to second in command.

The August rally 1966

On 18 August over a million people, the majority of them in their teens or early twenties, packed into Tiananmen Square in Beijing. The massive demonstration, which lasted a whole day, was evidence of the organising skill of Lin Biao and Chen Boda, who had made the arrangements for filling the Square with such huge numbers. Waving their Little Red Books, the demonstrators screamed themselves hoarse in an outpouring of veneration for their idol. They chanted and sang 'Mao Zedong is the red sun rising in the east'.

Enlisting the young

It was the ability to manipulate public opinion and behaviour, especially of the young, that allowed Mao to launch the Cultural Revolution, a movement that aimed at the creation of a new type of Chinese society. His attempt to do this was to convulse the whole of China for the next decade. In August 1966, Mao presented the students of Qinghai University with a banner inscribed in his own hand, 'Bombard the Headquarters.' It was his way of encouraging China's young people to criticise and attack those ideas and those members in party and government that he wanted to remove.

The decision to exploit the young in this way was no last-minute thought on Mao's part. In discussions he held with the Gang of Four late in 1965, he had

remarked wryly but with very serious intent: 'We have to depend on them [the young] to start a rebellion, a revolution, otherwise we may not be able to overthrow the demons and monsters. We must liberate the little devils. We need more monkeys to disrupt the palace.' Mao's imagery was drawn from the practice in the imperial court of having monkeys as pets, whose uncontrolled behaviour caused mayhem.

SOURCE B


黑龙江日报

我们伟大的领袖、伟大的统帅、伟大的舵手毛主席万岁！

无产阶级文化大革命是共产主义运动和社会主义革命的伟大创举

毛主席同百万群众共庆文化大革命

毛主席和林彪周恩来等同志接见学生代表并检阅文化革命大军的游行队伍

毛主席說："这个运动規模很大，确实把群众发动起来了，对全国人民的思想革命化有很大的意义。"

林彪周恩来同志发表重要讲话，北京哈尔滨长沙南京等地革命师生也讲了话

What does the front page of the Chinese newspaper shown in Source B suggest about the nature of the political relationship between Mao Zedong and Lin Biao at this point?

The front page of the *Heilongjiang Daily*, 19 August 1966, reports the news of the great rally held in Beijing the day before. The photos show Mao, Lin Biao and the adoring crowds, and the main headline reads 'Chairman Mao celebrates the Great Cultural Revolution with millions of people'.

The attack on the 'four olds'

The high point of the August rally came in a speech given by Lin Biao. In Mao's name, Lin identified 'four olds' as targets for the young to attack:

- old ideas
- old culture
- old customs
- old habits.

There was something bizarre about the aged Mao Zedong calling on the young to overthrow the old, but at the time the irony went unnoticed by the youngsters. They rushed to do his bidding with a terrifying intensity. China had been told that nothing in its past was worth preserving. Hardly anywhere in China, even the remotest regions, would remain untouched. Nearly every family would be affected by what was to happen. Millions would die; many more millions would have their lives irreparably damaged.

The great rallies 1966

Between August and November 1966, eight mass rallies were held in Tiananmen Square. Mao did not attend all of these; he said he found them exhausting. Nevertheless, his was the dominating spirit. Lin Biao, assisted on occasion by Jiang Qing, used the rallies to excite the crowds to ever-greater displays of affection and loyalty towards China's leader. Lin appealed to the great throngs to honour Mao Zedong as the outstanding revolutionary genius of the age who was 'remoulding the souls of the people'. It was this very attempt to remould the people of China that was to give the Cultural Revolution its destructive character.

Mao's reasons for launching the Cultural Revolution

So massively disruptive was the Cultural Revolution that it raises an obvious question. Why was Mao Zedong willing to plunge into renewed turmoil a nation which had only just emerged from decades of foreign occupation, civil war and famine? At its simplest, the answer is that the Cultural Revolution was to be the means by which Mao would reassert his authority over China and the CCP. He had a number of interlocking objectives:

- to preserve himself in power for the rest of his life by removing all possible sources of opposition
- to obliterate the damaging record of the failure of the Great Leap Forward
- to ensure that his concept of revolution would continue after his death by remoulding Chinese society and culture in such a way that they could never be changed back
- to reassert his authority over the Politburo, which during his absence had become too representative of the right-wing reactionaries
- to prevent China making the same mistakes as the revisionist Soviet Union

- to break the power of the urban bureaucrats and restore the peasant character of China's Communist revolution.

Mao's idea of permanent revolution

Mao was convinced that many in the upper echelons of the CCP were infected by **'neo-capitalism'** and a desire for personal power that robbed them of their revolutionary purpose. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, to give it its full title, has, therefore, to be seen as an extension of Mao's belief in permanent revolution. He believed that if the Chinese revolution stood still it would cease to be a genuine movement, and he feared that after him the CCP would simply become a self-justifying bureaucracy destroying all that had been achieved by the PRC since 1949.

KEY TERM

'Neo-capitalism'
A restoration of the bourgeois system based on individualism and profit-making.

To prevent this, he planned to circumvent the party bureaucracy and appeal directly to the Chinese people. In a great populist gesture he would enlist them in a campaign to save the revolution. Mao used a memorable paradox to describe his policy; he spoke of 'great disorder across the land leading to great order': only by a policy of deliberate disruption could the forces of reaction be exposed and destroyed.

Mao's reaction to Soviet developments

Mao was also motivated by developments in the USSR, China's great Communist rival. In the late 1950s, he had interpreted the Soviet attack on Stalin's 'cult of personality' as a criticism of his own leadership of China (see page 141). The news in 1964 of the fall from power of the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, gave Mao further concern. The official reason given by the Soviet authorities for their dismissal of Khrushchev was that he had engaged in 'hare-brained' schemes in an unsuccessful attempt to reform the Soviet economy. Nobody in China had openly dared to use such a term in regard to Mao's policies, but the parallel between the situation in the USSR and China was too obvious to ignore.

Mao's anxieties went beyond the personal. What he observed in the Soviet Union was a party corrupted by its own exercise of power into a self-satisfied elite. Despite his many personal differences with Stalin, Mao had never been willing to accept the lengths to which de-Stalinisation had gone in the USSR. He viewed Khrushchev and his successors as guilty of betraying the revolution by encouraging revisionism and detente with the West. He was determined that such developments would not happen in China after him.

Mao's wish to renew the party's revolutionary spirit

Mao judged that CCP and government officials were already being seduced by the privileges of power. He had convinced himself that the older revolutionaries who had defeated the Nationalists and established the People's Republic had lost their revolutionary fervour. Consequently, the only way to save his revolution was by waging war against the Communist Party hierarchy itself.

Testing the younger members of the party

However, Mao also judged that the younger members of the party had yet to be tested. They had not undergone the rigours of the legendary experiences of the CCP: the White Terror, the Long March, the anti-Japanese war and the struggle against the Guomindang (GMD). They needed hardening in the crucible of revolutionary struggle.

Undermining the bureaucrats and intellectuals

A further aim was Mao's determination to preserve the Chinese Revolution as an essentially peasant movement. It was not that he had a high regard for the peasants as individuals (see page 172). Nevertheless, he held that as a class the peasants were the main revolutionary force in China. That is why he had built his revolution on them. It was also why he did not want affairs to be run by the urban bureaucrats, whose commitment to continuing revolution he regarded as suspect.

Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi attacked

At a Party Central Committee meeting in August 1966, Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi were accused of being 'spearheads of the erroneous line' in trying to persuade the party to follow policies that ran counter to Mao's wishes. Two months later, following a Red Guard demonstration in Beijing aimed specifically at them, Deng and Liu were both formally dismissed from their positions in government and party on the grounds that they had adopted 'a bourgeois reactionary line' and had become 'revisionists'. Mao let it be known that he had been offended by the way in which Deng and Liu had previously tried to bypass him.

Wall posters were displayed denouncing both men for their deviation from Maoist thought. Liu and his wife, Wang Guangmei, were dragged from their government residence and beaten by a jeering mob. Liu was then forced to undergo a series of brutal 'struggle sessions' before being imprisoned in conditions which were deliberately intended to break his health. Suffering from diabetes, he eventually died in 1973 in solitary confinement after being refused proper medical treatment for his condition.

Deng Xiaoping's son, Pufang, was thrown from an upstairs window by Red Guards, an act of gratuitous violence that broke his spine and left him permanently paralysed. Deng himself suffered less harshly but he, too, was forced to undergo public humiliation, which involved his being ranted at by 3000 Red Guards. He then disappeared into solitary confinement before being sent to perform '**corrective labour**' in Jiangxi province in 1969.

KEY TERM

Corrective labour A form of imprisonment intended to re-educate prisoners into correct thinking.

SOURCE C



Wang Guangmei being manhandled by Red Guards. The garland of ping-pong balls has been put round her neck in mockery of her bourgeois habit of wearing expensive jewellery. Although she had been sentenced to death, Wang was reprieved by the personal intervention of Mao Zedong, who crossed her name off an execution list on which she appeared. It was one of the few occasions when Mao used his personal influence to save a victim of the Cultural Revolution. However, he made no move to save Liu Shaoqi. This may well have been vindictiveness on Mao's part; he was paying Liu back for opposing him earlier.

In what ways does the photo in Source C illustrate how the Red Guards behaved in this period? ?

Influence of Lin Biao, Jiang Qing and Kang Sheng

The dismissal of such prominent figures testified to the power that Lin Biao and Jiang Qing were able to exert in Mao's name. This authority was increased by the appointment of Kang Sheng (see page 88), a member of the Shanghai Forum and a devotee of Jiang Qing. He became a principal organiser of the purges that continued, at Mao's bidding, to decimate the upper echelons of the CCP throughout 1966 and 1967.

3 The Red Guards

▶ *What role did the Red Guards play in the Cultural Revolution?*

The Red Guard movement grew out of prepared soil. Since the Sino-Soviet divide in the 1950s (see page 136), pupils and students had been encouraged to regard themselves as pioneers under Mao Zedong in the advancement of international proletarian revolution. Mass rallies had been used in the anti-rightist campaigns in the 1950s. The young were made to feel that they had a special role to play, not only in the regeneration of the nation but in the creation of a new socialist world order. As one Red Guard later put it: 'We felt that we were defending China's revolution and liberating the world. All the big slogans made a generation of us feel that the Cultural Revolution really was a war, a war to defend Chairman Mao and the new China.'

SOURCE D



This 1974 photograph shows young schoolgirls ecstatically portraying their revolutionary fighting spirit by wearing military-style uniform and carrying mock weapons.

? Why do you think children as young as those shown in Source D became caught up in the revolutionary spirit of the times?

Mao's hold over the young

The reminiscences of those who had been Red Guards illustrate the extraordinary hold Mao had over them. One described how he believed Mao was a god: 'When Chairman Mao waved his hand at Tiananmen, a million Red Guards wept their hearts out as if by some hormonal reaction. He was divine, and the revolutionary tides of the world rose and fell at his command.' Another

recalled how willing he had been to give himself totally to Mao: 'I believed in Mao with every cell in my body. You felt you would give Chairman Mao your everything – your body, your mind, your spirit, your soul, your fate.'

Anthony Grey, a British correspondent in China, who was held under house arrest by the Chinese during the Cultural Revolution, observed that the worship of Mao by the young was not simply a product of official propaganda. There was a sense in which the young felt they had a direct personal relationship with him.

SOURCE E

From Anthony Grey, *Hostage in Peking*, Tagman Press, 2008, p. 56.

The teenage girls and youths … just went out of their heads. Jumping up and down, screaming shouting, waving red booklets of the Great Man's quotations. The excited crowd surged in a great rush against the triple barrier of soldiers who bulged forward with the momentum …

Suddenly he was gone and the still half-hysterical crowd was streaming after the little convoy of jeeps.

Outside the crowd formed up again round the Tien An Men and waited expectantly to see if Mao would make another appearance … but nothing happened. Then a young handsome Chinese of about eighteen who had been standing quietly in front of me turned and said to my great surprise in good English, 'Aren't you English?' … Eventually I said rather inanely, 'Excuse me but what are you waiting here for?' 'To see Chairman Mao of course,' he said and turned back to continue his vigilant watch on the rostrum of the Gate, like the other thousands around us, 'Why?' I persisted. The boy turned and with a polite expression which contained some pity for one who had to ask, he said quietly: 'Because I love Chairman Mao.'

He clearly did. This left a much more vivid impression with me than weeks of official propaganda.

According to Anthony Grey in Source E, what impressed him about the way in which the young regarded Mao? ?

Mao knew that the need to conform to the standards of their peers is very powerful among the young and that this makes them particularly susceptible to suggestion. The more idealistic they are, the more easily led they are. As Anthony Grey hinted, when idealism is linked to personal affection it is a powerful force. Nor should simple perversity be left out of the account. Marching through the streets chanting slogans is an easier option than working at one's studies. Most students in China were only too willing to believe that by insulting their teachers and burning their textbooks they were in the vanguard of progress.

Activities of the Red Guards

Once it was underway, Mao did not take part in the day-to-day direction of the Cultural Revolution. He withdrew from Beijing, leaving the officials at Zhongnanhai to the mercy of the Red Guards. Camped outside in Tiananmen

SOURCE F

? What does the photo in Source F suggest about the veneration in which Mao was held by the young?



The incident shown in this 1966 photograph, which was one of the high points of the first great rally in Tiananmen Square, was celebrated in the Chinese press as the moment when Mao gave his personal sanction to the Red Guards as the main movement leading the Cultural Revolution. The young girl came on to the balcony and to tumultuous applause fitted a Red Guard armband on Mao. When she told him her name was Song Binbin, which means 'gentle', Mao said it would be better as a Red Guard if her name were 'militant'. This story was often quoted as a sure sign that Mao intended the Cultural Revolution to be an essentially violent movement.

Square for months on end, the Guards kept up a constant loudspeaker barrage of insults directed at ministers and officials deemed to be 'rightists'. Anyone trying to break cover and leave the blockaded offices had to run the gauntlet of jeering youngsters ready to turn their insults into blows if given the slightest pretext. Jiang Qing and Lin Biao made sure that the besiegers were kept informed by going down in person to identify the ministers and officials who were to be abused and intimidated.

Red Guard terror

The Red Guards became a terrifying and destructive movement. By presenting chaos as more virtuous than order, Mao effectively declared that there was no restriction on what could be done in the name of the revolution. Students, trained in the Chinese tradition of obedience to parents and teachers, were suddenly told to insult and abuse them. For children to denounce their elders had enormous significance in a society where respect was ingrained. In a reversal of their traditional deference, they behaved with a particular virulence.

Anything that represented the corrupt past was labelled under the blanket term 'Confucius and Co', and was liable to be smashed. Temples, shrines and works of art became obvious targets; many priceless and irreplaceable treasures of Chinese civilisation were destroyed in a wave of organised vandalism. In the words of a Western correspondent: 'Mao told the Red Guards: "To rebel is justified!" They repaid him by crushing almost every semblance of tradition, decency and intellectual endeavour in China.'

Self-criticism and struggle sessions

Given free rein, the Red Guards seized public transport and took over radio and television networks. Anyone showing signs of 'decadent tendencies', the most obvious examples being the wearing of Western-style clothes, jewellery or make-up, was exposed to public humiliation. An especially vulnerable group were the intellectuals, those whose work or privileged way of life was judged to detach them from the people. Teachers, writers and even doctors were prey to the Red Guard squads who denounced them as 'bad elements' and made them publicly confess their class crimes. Those regarded as particularly culpable were forced to undergo 'struggle sessions'.

These ordeals, which became a dominant feature of the Cultural Revolution, were aimed at provoking and stimulating guilt. '**Brainwashing**' is an appropriate term to describe the terror tactics. To induce guilt, the victims were made to study Mao's writings followed by periods of intense self-criticism and confession. The first confession was never accepted; the accused had to dig deeper and deeper into their memory to recall all their errors and crimes against the party and the people.

A common practice was for the Guards to force the accused to adopt the 'aeroplane' position; with head thrust down, knees bent and arms pulled high behind the back, the unfortunate victims were made to catalogue their past offences against the people. Those who maintained their innocence were systematically punched and kicked. After days of torment and constant denunciation as 'running dogs of imperialism' and 'betrayers of the people', few had the physical or mental strength to continue resisting.

KEY TERM

Brainwashing Using a combination of physical torture and psychological coercion to disorientate victims so that they become susceptible to suggestion and direction.

SOURCE G

? What does the photo in Source G illustrate about the behaviour of the Red Guards?



Huang Xinting, the military commander of the Chengdu region, forced by Red Guards into the 'aeroplane' position. The placard around his neck accuses him of being a rightist.

Official support for Red Guard terror

Although it often appeared that Red Guard action was spontaneous, it was not only officially sanctioned but also officially directed. Xie Fuzhi, the minister for public security, in addressing the police forces, declared: 'When the masses hate the bad elements so deeply that we are unable to stop them, then don't try. The police should stand on the side of the Red Guards and provide them with information about the people of the five categories.' These ' five categories' were defined in catch-all terms as:

- landlords
- rich peasants
- reactionaries
- bad elements
- rightists.

The names and whereabouts of all those listed under these headings were passed on to the Red Guard detachments, who then descended upon their victims. Rae Yang, a former Red Guard, recalled a typical experience:

SOURCE H

From Rae Yang, *Spider Eaters: A Memoir*, University of California Press, 1977, p. 118.

On this day [in 1967] I saw a teacher in the fountain, a middle-aged man. His clothes were muddy. Blood was streaming down his head, as a number of students were throwing bricks at him. He tried to dodge the bricks. While he did so, without noticing it, he crawled in the fountain, round and round, like an animal in the zoo. This teacher survived; another was not so fortunate. Teacher Chen, our art teacher, was said to resemble a spy in the movies. He was a tall, thin man with long hair which was a sign of decadence. Moreover, he seemed gloomy and smoked a lot. In the past he had asked students to draw naked female bodies in front of plaster statues to corrupt them. For these 'crimes' he was beaten to death by a group of senior students.

What does Source H illustrate about the mentality of the Red Guards? ?

Victims and victimisers

The savagery seemed endless. In Beijing itself, in addition to the daily scenes of beatings in the street, theatres and sports grounds became the venues of systematic killings of bound victims. During a two-day period in Daxing county, north of Beijing, 300 people were clubbed to death in the public square. In Guangxi province, 67,000 deaths were recorded in the decade after 1966, while in Mongolia, Tibet and Sichuan the figures ran into hundreds of thousands. At the trial of the Gang of Four in 1980 (see page 233), it was charged that the purges which they had sanctioned had resulted in the killing of over 500,000 CCP officials.

Cultural vandalism

PRC documents record that between 1966 and 1976, in the course of attacking the treasures of China's past, the Red Guards and the other government-sponsored terror squads wrecked, burned or razed 4922 of Beijing's 6843 'places of cultural or historical interest'. The Forbidden City only just survived. Forewarned in August 1966 that the Red Guards planned to destroy it, Zhou Enlai moved in a unit of the PLA who prevented the youngsters running amok.

Arguably the greatest single act of desecration occurred not in Beijing but in Qufu in Shandong province, the home of Confucius. A group of some 200

Beijing University students and teachers went there to join hundreds of local students. Over a four-week period in November 1966, this group committed 6618 organised acts of vandalism. These included:

- the defacing or destruction of 929 paintings
- the tearing up or burning of 2700 books
- the smashing of 1000 statues and monuments
- the desecration of 2000 graves.

4 The PLA and the last stage of the Cultural Revolution

▶ *What was the PLA's contribution to the development of the Cultural Revolution?*

After the Cultural Revolution's first two years, 1966–7, the widespread disruption had brought industrial production to a halt and had led to schools and universities being closed. More immediately disturbing, a series of local civil wars raged in China. The sheer zeal and passion of the Red Guard movement had turned in on itself. Regional groups had begun to clash with one another. Factory workers formed their own units and challenged the claim of the students to be the true leaders of the movement. This convinced the authorities at the top that matters had gone far enough. Orders were given that the work of the Red Guards should be taken over by the PLA.

Mao and the PLA

Although it had initially approved the student violence, the PLA was unwilling to share its prestige as the creator of China's revolution. The PLA claimed a special relationship with Chairman Mao and with the Chinese people, which entitled it to run the Cultural Revolution. Army units travelled throughout China in a campaign to impress on the people the totality of the PLA's loyalty to Mao Zedong. They took over from the Red Guards in hunting down 'counter-revolutionaries'.

There is a strong case for suggesting that the anarchy associated with the Red Guards was more apparent than real. Mao knew that at any time he could use the PLA to pull them back into line. In all its essentials, the Cultural Revolution was directed from the top by Mao and the CCRG. It may often have had the air of spontaneity but there were guiding hands behind the marches and the vandalism. The idealistic youngsters who appeared to lead the Cultural Revolution were pawns in the power struggle in the CCP.

Demobilisation of the Red Guards 1967–72

The ultimate control that the government had through the PLA over China's rebellious youngsters was evident in the ease with which it carried out its decision to redirect the idealism of those who had made up the Red Guard movement. Another great campaign was announced which called on the youngsters 'to go up to the mountains and down to the villages'. They were urged to go into the countryside and live among the peasants; in this way, they would both learn what life was like for 80 per cent of the Chinese people and deepen their understanding of revolution.

However, the real motive behind the slogans was much less idealistic. The government's main aim was to rid the urban areas of the gangs of delinquent youth who had threatened to become uncontrollable in the general turmoil. The campaign may also be seen as an extension of Mao's policy for making city intellectuals experience the harsh realities of life that were the common lot of the ordinary Chinese. The notion that people of privilege should learn 'the dignity of labour' was one of Mao's constant refrains.

The experience of the young in the countryside

Whatever the ulterior motives underlying the campaign may have been, there was no doubting that it aroused a massive response. Between 1967 and 1972, over 12 million young people moved from the towns into the countryside. Their experience proved to be very different from what they had expected. Most had a very miserable time of it, being wholly unprepared for the primitive conditions they encountered. They had no countryside skills; they did not know how to grow food or rear livestock and the peasants had little food to spare for them.

Disillusion among the young

The idealism of those who made up this great experiment rarely survived the misery and appallingly low standards of living that they met; it is doubtful that more than a small minority felt they had gained from the experience. It was this as much as anything that made them doubt what they had never questioned before – the wisdom and good will of Mao Zedong. They began to realise they had been used. As one youngster recalled: 'It was only when I went to the countryside that I suddenly discovered the conflict between language and reality and this gave me a profound distrust of the language of all this state propaganda.'

The PLA's 'cleansing the class ranks' campaign 1968–71

The dispersal of the Red Guards did not mean a weakening of the movement against the anti-Maoists. The CCRG, under the Gang of Four's leadership, developed a new campaign known as **'cleansing the class ranks'**. Committees were established in all the major regions of China and given the task of

KEY TERM

'Cleansing the class ranks' A terror campaign to exterminate all those whose social background, in the eyes of the extremists running China, made them real or potential enemies of Mao and the Communist state.

KEY TERM

Pogrom A state-organised persecution against a particular group of people.

'eradicating once and for all any signs of capitalism'. The result was an orgy of killing and destruction as grim as anything perpetrated by the Red Guards. One official later described it as a 'massive **pogrom**, a massive campaign of torture and murder to uncover wholly imaginary mass conspiracies that could involve tens of thousands'. The fearful success of the 'cleansing the class ranks' movement as a campaign of terror is evident in the body count:

- In Inner Mongolia 22,900 were killed and 120,000 maimed.
- In Hebei province 84,000 were arrested, 2955 of whom then died after being tortured.
- In Yunnan 15,000 people were 'cleansed'; of these, 6979 died from their injuries.
- In Beijing 3731 people were killed; these cases were officially classified as 'suicide'.
- In Zhejiang 100,000 were arrested and 'struggled against'; of these, 9198 were 'hounded to death'.
- In Binyang county in Guangxi province 3681 were killed in a mass execution over a ten-day period.

Decline of violence

Mao stepped in at this point and claimed that the excesses must be checked. He wanted his personal rivals and the nation's class enemies removed, but he did not want damage done to his image as China's great benefactor and champion of his people. It is noteworthy that after Mao had launched the Cultural Revolution, he had tended to remain in the background, allowing others to organise it. He spent much of his time away from Beijing, leaving affairs in the hands of Jiang Qing and her adherents. He said to his doctor: 'Let others stay busy with politics. Let them handle the problem of the movement by themselves.'

Mao's absence from the political centre meant that while the policies were carried out under his authority, he was rarely involved in the everyday details. It may even be that, on occasion, the Cultural Revolution was pushed further than Mao had intended. He once said, only half-jokingly, that Jiang Qing and the Gang of Four were more Maoist than he was. But none of this absolves Mao from responsibility for what occurred. Everything was done in his name. By leaving Jiang and the extremists in control, he sanctioned what they did to the Chinese people. Mao was the true originator of the movement which convulsed China.

The fall of Lin Biao 1971–2

By the early 1970s, there were signs that many Chinese were becoming disenchanted with the Cultural Revolution. Despite this, there was little open opposition to Mao. The cult of Mao Zedong was too well established for that to happen. What followed, therefore, was that the power seekers in the CCP declared their wholehearted loyalty to the Great Helmsman and jockeyed for

position while awaiting his death which, judging from the rumours that leaked out about his declining health, could not be long delayed.

There was one major exception to the practice of wait and see. In an extraordinary set of events, Lin Biao, the nominated successor to Mao, became a victim of the Cultural Revolution that he had done so much to engineer. The exact details are unclear. However, what appears to have occurred is that by 1971 Mao or those closest to him had become disturbed by the growing influence that Lin Biao and the PLA were acquiring under the Cultural Revolution. There was a fear that the PLA, which was now strongly represented in the Politburo, would assert its strength over the politicians. Lin Biao was a key figure in this. Referring to Lin, Mao remarked, 'There is somebody who says he wants to support me, elevate me, but what he really has in mind is supporting himself, elevating himself.' As a first step towards removing them, therefore, Lin and other PLA leaders were told that they must submit themselves to self-criticism.

Lin Biao's plot against Mao

Realising that he was a marked man, Lin became a reluctant conspirator in an assassination plot, organised by his son, Lin Liguo, an officer in the Chinese air force. However, Lin Liguo's sister, Dodo, leaked details of the plan to Zhou Enlai. A full security alert was activated and Mao was hustled away for his own protection. With all chance of the plot's succeeding now gone, Lin Biao made a desperate bid to escape to the USSR. On 13 September 1971, the plane carrying him and his family crashed in Outer Mongolia, killing all on board.

Whether this was an accident or sabotage remains a mystery. Mao insisted that he had not ordered the shooting down of the plane. This may well have been the truth. Mao had expressly rejected Zhou Enlai's suggestion that the aircraft be brought down. 'If we shoot the plane down, how can we explain it to the people of the whole country?' The likeliest explanation is the simplest; the plane, which had taken off in a great hurry without going through the full checklist, had simply run out of fuel.

Mao's reaction to the plot

Whatever the truth relating to the crash, Mao ought to have been content with the outcome. The man he regarded as his most dangerous rival had been removed. Yet the affair seemed to depress him. His doctor recorded that Mao 'took to his bed and lay there all day, saying and doing little. When he did get up, he seemed to have aged. His shoulders stooped and he walked with a shuffle. He could not sleep.' This may have been because he was a rapidly ageing man, prone to increasing bouts of depression, or it may have been that he truly believed that the thwarted assassination plot was an indication of how widespread the opposition to him in the party had become. It is likely that Mao, after leading his nation for 22 years, was dismayed by the realisation that special security measures were needed to protect him from his people.

The results of Lin Biao's fall

The news of the scandal surrounding Lin's fall was not publicly released until a year later, in 1972. The announcement came in the form of a 'criticise Lin Biao and Confucius' campaign. The name of Lin Biao, 'the great traitor and Soviet spy', was linked with the great reactionary figure of Chinese history. It was officially declared that Lin had been hatching a 'monstrous conspiracy' against Mao and the Chinese people. The memory of his treachery would last 'for ten thousand years'.

It was this public denunciation of Lin, a man who only a short while before had been second only to Mao in popular estimation, that led many to question privately whether they could any longer believe the official pronouncements issued by the PRC authorities. Lin Biao, Mao's nominated successor, the compiler of the Little Red Book, the creator and propagator of the cult of Mao, was now to be reviled as a betrayer of his great leader and a traitor to the Cultural Revolution, the very movement that he had helped to form. People asked themselves whether this was really credible.

The last stage of the Cultural Revolution

The sudden and baffling changes in the reputation of political leaders created the gravest doubts as to whether any government statement was trustworthy. At the time, it took a brave or a foolhardy person to say openly what many CCP members and ordinary Chinese were thinking. One who did speak out was Tu Deyong, a CCP member from Chengdu. Early in 1973, he published 'Ten Indictments against the Great Cultural Revolution', the first three of which read:

SOURCE I

From Tu Deyong's 'Ten Indictments', spring 1973, quoted in Roderick Macfarquar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, Belknap Press, 2006, p. 351.

The Great Cultural Revolution has subjected more than 90 percent of cadres and more than 60 percent of the masses to mindless attacks of every possible kind, political persecution, sometimes even physical ruin. It has seriously affected the eagerness with which cadres and the masses build socialism as well as the loyalty they feel towards the party.

The Great Cultural Revolution has had an extremely destructive impact on industrial production, with production stagnating, financial resources drying up, the state treasury being emptied, and people's standard of living declining.

The Great Cultural Revolution has led to an unprecedented degeneration in social morals and has guided young people onto a road of criminality.

? According to Source I, what have been the harmful effects of the Cultural Revolution?

The inevitable happened. Tu was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. At his trial he said tellingly, 'if someone like me, who has really deep feelings for the party and Chairman Mao is now having thoughts like these, one can

easily imagine how other people look upon the Great Cultural Revolution'. The charges made by Tu Deyong against the PRC's government were powerful but they could not be admitted by the authorities. Nevertheless, from 1972 to Mao's death in 1976 there was a noticeable lessening of the extremism with which the persecutions were conducted. There are a number of explanations for this:

- There was a general uncertainty in the party about the ailing Mao's true intentions.
- The effect of the Lin Biao affair led to a rethink in the CCP about how severe its policies should be. Initially, it had seemed that Lin shared the same extreme ideas that the Gang of Four had, but once Lin came under Mao's suspicion, the Gang were swift to disassociate themselves from him.
- There was an unacknowledged recognition by the party that the points made by critics such as Tu Deyong were an accurate description of the harmful effects of the Cultural Revolution.
- The party wished to impress the USA, whose president, Richard Nixon, made an official visit to the PRC in 1972 (see page 134).

The return of Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping

An important effect of Lin Biao's dramatic end was the enhancement of Zhou Enlai's position in the government and party. Zhou had played a key part in uncovering the plot against Mao. Zhou was one of the great survivors of Chinese politics. His shrewd sense of political judgement and genuine popularity enabled him to evade the attempts made to bring him down during the Cultural Revolution. It was Zhou who had worked to prevent the fracturing of the party during the power struggles of the 1960s and it was he who became recognised as an outstanding international statesman in the 1970s (see page 134).

Lin's fall also benefited Deng Xiaoping, another great survivor in the hazardous world of PRC politics. His earlier dismissal for having been one of the **'capitalist roaders'** now worked to his advantage. In 1973, Zhou Enlai, who had great respect for Deng's detailed knowledge of the workings of the CCP, invited him to re-enter the government. By 1975, Deng had regained his place as party secretary. But his rehabilitation did not go unchallenged. Jiang Qing and the Maoists, disturbed by the grip that the moderates appeared to be regaining and aware that their previous association with Lin might damage their position, intensified the 'criticise Lin Biao and Confucius' campaign by turning it into an attack on 'the pragmatist clique', a reference to Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping.

The return of Zhou and Deng following the fall of Lin Biao meant that the Cultural Revolution was less savagely enforced after 1973. But it was far from being abandoned. Arrests of suspected persons continued and the prison camps went on expanding. The truth was that as long as the CCRG, dominated by the Gang of Four, had Mao's support the Cultural Revolution would continue.

KEY TERM

'Capitalist roaders'
A derogatory term used by hardliners to condemn those in the government who wished to see the economy modernised on neo-capitalist lines.

The Tiananmen Incident 1976

The influence that Jiang and the Maoists still exercised during the last phase of the Cultural Revolution was evident in the crisis that followed the death from lung cancer of Zhou Enlai in January 1976. With his moderating influence now removed, the power struggle took another turn. In April, the memorial service for Zhou, held in the Great Hall of the People facing Tiananmen Square, became the occasion for a large-scale demonstration in favour of the policies that Zhou had advocated. Tens of thousands flocked into the square to lay wreaths and pictures of Zhou around the **Heroes' Monument**.

KEY TERM

Heroes' Monument
A large shrine, commemorating the great deeds of China's revolutionary past, at the southern end of Tiananmen Square.

This spontaneous gathering of people was in defiance of the official order that there should be no public displays of mourning. Speeches were made at the monument; these became increasingly bolder in tone, graduating from praise of Zhou Enlai to attacks on the government for its corruption. Fearing that the demonstration might get out of hand, the mayor of Beijing ordered riot police to remove the flowers and tributes and disperse the crowds. When some of the demonstrators resisted the police used force. Scattered but violent confrontations took place before the police managed to clear the square.

The Politburo condemned this 'Tiananmen Incident' as the work of rightist agitators and laid a large part of the blame on Deng Xiaoping, whom they dismissed from his position as party secretary. Although he had not been present at the demonstration, Deng chose not to risk staying to defend himself; instead, he hastily left Beijing for Guangdong province, from where he would wait on events.

The death of Mao Zedong, September 1976

No clear lead came from Mao Zedong on how to handle the Tiananmen Incident; he was now incapable of giving one. Sustained only by massive injections of drugs, he was comatose for much of the time. Yet, even though he was incapacitated, his power remained. In an odd way it was actually increased. Since he was so enfeebled, it became increasingly difficult to know exactly what his ideas and instructions actually were. This had two conflicting consequences:

- It paralysed the fearful into inaction since they were frightened of taking steps that Mao might later condemn in one of his rational moments.
- It encouraged those who believed that Mao would never recover to try to manoeuvre themselves into a position from which they could subsequently seize power.

The uncertain situation appeared to leave Jiang Qing and the Gang of Four in control. However, their authority depended wholly on their closeness to Mao. Once he died, there was no certainty about what would happen.

Given Mao's god-like status, it was somehow fitting that his death in September 1976 had been preceded six weeks earlier by what many saw as an omen: a massive earthquake in Tangshan, an industrial city in Hebei province, which

caused the death of 250,000 of the city's inhabitants. People recalled that in Chinese lore earthquakes, 'the speaking of the dragon', denoted the advent of great changes in the state. Mao had been deified in his own lifetime and, when gods die, the succession – as events were to show – becomes a troubled affair.

The Gang of Four's weakness

The Gang of Four's expectation had been that the death of both Mao and Zhou would clear the path for them to full accession to power. But they had miscalculated. They did not recognise the reality that, for all their ferocity in the Cultural Revolution, they had no authority of their own except that bestowed on them by Mao Zedong. He may frequently have drifted into the background and left things to them, but the truth was that without his support they were defenceless and prey to those they had previously persecuted. This first became apparent after Zhou's death and even more so after Mao's. The Gang of Four had hoped that the passing of the two party giants would be the prelude to their taking full command. In the event, it exposed how little support they had in party and government.

5 The effects of the Cultural Revolution

▶ *In what areas of Chinese life had the Cultural Revolution had particular impact?*

So extensive and disruptive had the Cultural Revolution been that it had far-reaching consequences.

Impact on politics

- A definitive comment on the political consequences of the Cultural Revolution was made by the CCP in 1981 in its 'resolution on history', in which it declared that 'the Cultural Revolution was responsible for the most severe setback and heaviest losses suffered by the Party and the people since the founding of the People's Republic'.
- The Cultural Revolution threw Chinese politics into turmoil. Ninety per cent of the CCP's members came under some form of attack between 1966 and 1976.
- It revealed the deep divisions within the CCP and showed that its politics were characterised not by unity but by personal and group rivalry.
- The power struggle that had accompanied the Cultural Revolution and the bewildering fall in the reputation of party leaders undermined trust in party policies. A party worker later described how she and her husband had reacted: 'Both my husband and I were disillusioned, aware that something

was fundamentally wrong with the system in which we had believed so devotedly.' A Chen villager later admitted: 'the Lin Biao affair provided us with a major lesson; we came to see that the leaders up there could say today that something is round, tomorrow, that it's flat. We lost faith in the system.'

- The failure of the Gang of Four to succeed Mao in power indicated that for all their ability to terrify opponents, they were powerless without him.
- Despite the failure of the Maoists to retain ultimate control, the extremism of the Cultural Revolution left a legacy of violent political suppression. No matter how liberal the economic and social policies that his successors followed after 1976, they remained committed to the belief that the crushing of political opposition was a legitimate method of government.

Mao's prison camps: the *laogai*

KEY TERM

Laogai The term, meaning 're-education through labour', came to be used to describe the prison-camp system itself.

The Cultural Revolution's aim of enforcing political conformity in China resulted in the creation of a vast network of labour camps in which those who were suspected of opposing Mao were imprisoned. As the name ***laogai*** suggested, the official theory was that the camps were places not of punishment but of re-education. The fiction was maintained that the mass of the people were happy and contented in the Communist state created by Mao, and that those who protested against the system were the exceptions, who were not so much bad as misguided. It was the state's duty, therefore, to help them towards the truth by putting them in camps where they could be trained into enlightenment.

Life in the camps

In reality, the camps became places where the harshest means were used to dehumanise the prisoners, who were forced to do humiliating and backbreaking work while being systematically starved. The camps were set up throughout China, but many of the worst were deliberately built in the most inhospitable parts of China where the bitter cold of winter or the searing heat of summer made life a torture for the prisoners. To obtain even the bare minimum ration of food, prisoners had to make a full confession of their crimes. Those who persisted in claiming that they were innocent were deprived of sleep, beaten and starved until they broke down and conformed. The following are some of the revealing statistics relating to the camps:

- The average number of prisoners held in the camps each year during Mao's time was 10 million.
- Over 25 million prisoners died during that period, the number being composed of those who were officially executed, those who died from hunger and ill treatment, and those who killed themselves. Even in death, prisoners were treated with contempt. The term used by the prison authorities to describe those who took their own lives was 'alienating themselves from the Party and the people'.
- By the time of Mao's death in 1976, which brought the end of the Cultural Revolution, there were more than 5000 labour camps spread across China.

Economic effects of the Cultural Revolution

The disruption occasioned by the Cultural Revolution inevitably led to serious economic setbacks. In theory, the PRC ran a third Five-Year Plan from 1966 to 1970, but the social turmoil resulted in its being abandoned, even though this was not officially admitted. The statistics tell their own story; between 1966 and 1976:

- industrial production fell by 13.8 per cent
- steel output fell from 15 million tonnes to 11 million tonnes
- coal output fell from 260 million tonnes to 206 million tonnes
- oil production fell from 15 million tonnes to 13.9 million tonnes
- construction fell by 33 per cent
- rail freight declined from 555 million tonnes to 421 million tonnes
- agricultural production fell by two per cent
- the PRC's **deficit** increased from 1 billion yuan to 2.25 billion yuan.

KEY TERM

Deficit The gap between government income and expenditure.

The government's response to the shortages was to resort to austerity. It called on the masses to 'practise frugality while making revolution'. Rationing became the norm:

- The assets of state companies were frozen.
- Borrowing from, and lending by, banks were heavily restricted.
- Travel permits were required for travel from one province to another.
- The purchase of cooking oil and rice was restricted to those with special permits.

In introducing the austerity measures, officials quoted Mao's statement: 'the situation in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution nationwide is not merely good, but excellent'. This fiction was sustained throughout the years of disruption. It was the misdirection and failure of the economy under Mao that Deng Xiaoping would address as his major reform policy after 1978.

Impact on culture

It is important to understand how Mao interpreted culture. For him, it was never a separate, detached aspect of society. From the 1930s onwards, he had taught that:

- Culture was central, not peripheral. It was a nation's culture that defined its character.
- Throughout history, the culture of every society was the direct product of the values laid down by the ruling class. It was the means by which rulers imposed their control over the people.
- Now that China was a proletarian society, the culture had to be proletarian. All traces of the previous bourgeois culture had to be eradicated.

Culture, for Mao, therefore, was not a matter of refined tastes; it was about the life of the people. It followed that all creative artists – writers, painters,

musicians, film makers and so on – must accept that their first duty was to serve the people by fighting the class war. Their works must further the cause of revolution. Mao had no time for artistic self-expression for its own sake. He asserted that there was 'no such thing as art for art's sake. Proletarian literature and art are part of the whole revolutionary cause.' It was such reasoning that gave the movement the title, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The role of Jiang Qing

In a remarkable move, Mao decided that his wife, Jiang Qing, was to be the creator-in-chief of the new Chinese culture he desired. He gave her the responsibility for turning his general denunciation of China's 'four olds' into a definite programme for the suppression of traditional Chinese society (see page 198). Mao instructed her to become the 'cultural purifier of the nation'.

Believing that her former career as an actress ideally qualified her for such a task, Jiang applied herself to the job with fanatical zeal:

- She imposed a rigid system of censorship which denied a public showing or performance to any work which did not meet her criteria of revolutionary purity.
- Only those writings, art works, broadcast programmes and films which had directly relevant contemporary Chinese themes were permitted.
- Western music, classical and pop, was banned.
- Traditional Chinese opera was replaced by a repertoire of specially commissioned contemporary works.

The works which Jiang commissioned were a set of opera-ballets, all concerned in the most naive fashion with the triumph of the proletariat over its class enemies. They were an exact expression of Mao's demand that Chinese culture must be relevant and meaningful to the people by having as their only theme the struggle of the heroic masses. Grindingly tedious though they were, the opera-ballets were loudly applauded by the privileged audiences of party members who dared not reveal their true feelings.

Jiang Qing's rejection of all non-proletarian culture was an intellectually and emotionally destructive process that, by the early 1970s, had begun to produce an artistic wasteland. Musicians, painters and writers who showed reluctance to embrace the new rigidities were denounced and sent to 're-educational' labour camps where they were treated in brutal ways. One example was the denial of tools to the musicians who were sent to work in the fields; pianists and string players were made to scratch at the ground with their hands so that they would lose sensitivity in their fingers and so never be able to play well again.

Lack of resistance to Jiang's orders

There were rare attempts to question Jiang Qing's suffocating political correctness. On one occasion, Deng Xiaoping dared to suggest that culture was

about entertainment as well as indoctrination. He remarked caustically, 'After a hard week's work people want to go to the theatre to relax, but they go there and watch Jiang Qing's pieces and find they are on an effing battle field.'

However, Deng apart, none of the leading politicians was prepared to challenge Jiang's policy of cultural barbarism. They, like the majority of artists, opted publicly to approve her great cultural experiment while privately hoping that her power would be broken once the ageing Mao had died. An understandable fear of what might be done to them and their families led them to accept the unacceptable without complaint.

Cultural destruction

Jiang's stranglehold on the arts remained for the whole of the decade between 1966 and Mao's death ten years later. By then, it was clear that the result of this artistic persecution had not been the creation of a new culture but merely the near destruction of the old one. Writers and artists had been frightened either into inaction or into producing mediocre works that would not fall foul of the censors. Twenty years after the events, Deng Xiaoping's son, Pufang, reflected: 'The Cultural Revolution was not just a disaster for the Party, for the country, but for the whole people. We were all victims, people of several generations. One hundred million people were its victims.'

Impact of the Cultural Revolution on education

There is a sense in which education in any meaningful form simply stopped for much of the Cultural Revolution. A census compiled in 1982, six years after Mao's death, contained the following revealing figures:

- Less than one per cent of the working population had a university degree.
- Only eleven per cent had received schooling after the age of sixteen.
- Only 26 per cent had received schooling between the ages of twelve and sixteen.
- Only 35 per cent had received schooling before the age of twelve.

Reasons for lack of educational progress

The principal reason for the sharp decline in qualified youngsters was the disruption caused by the Cultural Revolution. Between 1966 and 1970, 130 million of China's young people simply stopped attending school or university. Education itself as an ideal was undermined. The deliberate creation of disorder and the encouragement of pupils and students to ridicule or attack their teachers and reject all forms of traditional learning had the obvious consequence of undermining the purpose of education itself. Nothing was regarded as being of intrinsic worth any longer. Learning and study were dismissed as worthless unless they served the revolution. It was more important to train loyal party workers than it was to prepare China's young people to take their place in a modern state. That was why, having used the young as the

instrument for waging the Cultural Revolution, Mao then sent 12 million of them not back to school and college but 'up to the mountains and down to the villages' (see page 209).

Table 8.1 Number of universities and higher education colleges operating in China 1949–85

? What main trends are indicated in the table? How is the contrast between the figures for 1961 and those for 1965–76 to be explained?

Year	Universities	Year	Universities
1949	200	1970	434
1957	205	1972	434
1958	229	1976	434
1959	791	1982	598
1961	1289	1984	805
1965	434	1985	1016

7 May cadre schools

KEY TERM

Cadre schools Labour camps where suspect government and CCP officials were sent.

Typifying Mao's approach to education was a particular initiative early in the Cultural Revolution. Taking their title from a directive issued by Mao Zedong on 7 May 1966, **cadre schools** were intended to teach those who attended them 'the dignity of labour' by working on the land to learn how the peasants lived. The schools were essentially primitive farms where soft-living party officials and those suspected of lacking full commitment to the regime's policies were sent. Wang Hongwen, one of the Gang of Four, remarked, 'All the ones who aren't obedient, we send them there.' Organised by Lin Biao, the schools were barely different from labour camps; life was made deliberately hard within them and the average two-year term of 're-education' could be extended if inmates failed to cooperate.

Over 1000 such schools were established across eighteen provinces, holding some 100,000 higher rank cadres. A notable inmate was Deng Xiaoping. Many thousands more schools were set up for lower officials, holding possibly up to 250,000 cadres. 'Intellectuals', purged during the Cultural Revolution, were also dumped in these places. Suicide and deaths from malnutrition were common. With the easing of the severity of the Cultural Revolution following the death of Lin Biao in 1971, the schools began to be closed down. None was still in existence at the time of Mao's death in 1976.

Influence of the Cultural Revolution on health provision

Mao and the Communists had begun with high hopes of providing the people with health care. It was the government's policy in the early years of the PRC to train many more doctors and nurses, with the specific aim of providing direct medical care in the remoter parts of China. In the 1950s, large numbers of Chinese were treated by a qualified doctor for the first time in their lives. However, the number of such doctors never reached the original targets because here, as in so many areas of social life, politics intervened. As with education,

so with health, the original good intentions were undermined by the disruption caused by the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

China's doctors attacked

The Cultural Revolution saw doctors coming under attack as a professional class that lived off the backs of the workers. The accusation was that, not having learned the 'dignity of labour', they were a privileged elite who used their special skills to make money in order to indulge in a bourgeois lifestyle. The consequence was that to survive doctors had to subordinate medical considerations to political ones. This produced such absurdities as surgeons cancelling operations in order to show their solidarity with the workers by sweeping floors and cleaning toilets.

Caught up in this oppressive atmosphere, some doctors decided that since showing pain was a bourgeois reaction and that bearing things without flinching was a sign of revolutionary purpose, they would no longer use anaesthetics and **analgesics**. China's maternity words resounded to the groans of women in labour as, denied any painkillers, they struggled to suppress their cries.

KEY TERMS

Analgesics Painkillers.

Barefoot doctors Teams of swiftly trained medics who were sent into the countryside to provide a rudimentary health service.

The barefoot doctors

Despite the denigration of the medical profession on political grounds, Mao remained aware of the propaganda value of effective health provision. It was such thinking that lay behind the crash programme for training doctors that was introduced by the late 1960s. In keeping with the notion that it was their long period of academic study that had detached the doctors from the people, the new system was based on short practical courses. Instead of long years of preparation, the trainees would now engage in six-month periods of intensive study with the emphasis wholly on the practical. Once trained in the basics, the new doctors would be sent to work among the peasants. It was very similar to the way in which the ex-Red Guards had been dispersed into the countryside (see page 209).

The scheme had its undoubted successes. By 1973, over 1 million new doctors had been trained. They contributed greatly to the improvement of the lives of the peasants. Known colloquially as the '**barefoot doctors**', these idealistic young general practitioners travelled around rural China providing treatment, often free of charge. But impressive though such dedicated doctors were, often performing minor miracles in primitive conditions, they were a stop-gap. They could not provide the full national medical service that a modern state requires.

Impact on women and the family

Women and society at large had barely had time to recover from the famine (see page 173) when they were plunged into the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. The rejection of the importance of the individual and the family that came with

collectivisation was re-emphasised with particular force during the Cultural Revolution:

- Private property and ownership were now depicted as crimes against Communist society, which was engaged in a great collective effort to build a new world.
- The enforced pooling of resources and effort meant that the economic link that held families together was broken.
- Whereas in traditional China the **extended family**, which might in practice be a whole village, had been the main provider of help in difficult times, in Mao's China that role was taken over by the state.
- The provision of social welfare, such as education and medical care, was now to be organised and delivered by Communist Party officials and appointees.

KEY TERMS

Extended family Not just parents and children but all the relatives, including in-laws.

Nuclear family Mother, father and their children, considered as a unit.

Denominations Separate groups within a faith, for example, Catholicism and Protestantism within Christianity.

Pressures on family structure

The excesses of the Cultural Revolution carried to their logical conclusion the process of enforced conformity that had begun with collectivisation and the outlawing of private ownership. The traditional **nuclear family** fell into one of the categories of the 'four olds' that the young were sent to destroy. Children were told to look on Mao Zedong and the Communist Party as their true parents, and, therefore, deserving of their first loyalty. Normal family affection was replaced by love for Mao. A Beijing student recalled: 'From the first day of my schooling, at seven years old, I learned "I love you Chairman Mao", not "I love you Mamma or Papa". I was brainwashed; the Party was purifying us so we would live for Mao's idealism instead of discovering our own humanity.'

The young were urged to inform on relatives who betrayed any sign of clinging to the decadent values of the past. In such a frenzied atmosphere, it was hard for any semblance of normal family life to survive. The Red Guards who, after terrorising the nation, were dispersed by Mao and sent 'up to the mountains and down to the villages', themselves became bewildered victims. It proved very difficult for them to pick up the pieces and return to anything approaching normal family life. They have been aptly described as China's lost generation.

Religious persecution during the Cultural Revolution

During the Cultural Revolution, religion was denounced as belonging to the 'four olds' and the attack on it intensified. No public worship or ceremony was allowed and any clergy who had survived the earlier persecutions were rounded up and imprisoned. So severe was the repression that it provoked an international outcry. Representatives of the world's major faiths, **denominations** and philosophies called on the PRC to call off the persecutions and show humanity.

Campaigns against 'Confucius and Co'

There was little response from Mao's government to the appeals, save to describe them as the product of capitalist distortions and anti-Chinese malice. The suppression of religion continued. Confucianism was denounced as representing all that was worst in China's past. The name of Confucius was linked to any person or movement that the authorities wished to denounce. 'Confucius and Co' became a standard term of abuse directed at any suspect group or organisation. Significantly, when Lin Biao came under fire during the Cultural Revolution, the slogan coined to attack him was 'criticise Lin Biao and Confucius' (see page 212).

6 Key debate

Was Mao a monster?

In 2005, a book appeared which claimed to tell the 'unknown story' of Mao. It did not quite do that since many of the 'discoveries' in the book had already been presented in a less dramatic way by scholars in the field. Nonetheless, the biography, *Mao: The Unknown Story* by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday quickly caught the imagination of students of China in the West, largely because Jung Chang was already a very popular Chinese novelist, whose family had lived and suffered under Mao. Her book's main contention was that Mao was a monstrous, uncaring dictator. A representative passage reads:

EXTRACT 1

From Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, Jonathan Cape, 2005, p. 509.

What Mao had in mind was a completely arid society, devoid of civilisation, deprived of representation of human feelings, inhabited by a herd with no sensibility, which would automatically obey his orders. He wanted the nation to be brain dead in order to carry out his big purge – and to live in this state permanently. In this he was more extreme than Hitler or Stalin.

Disturbed by the book's lack of balance, a set of China experts came together in 2010 to produce *Was Mao Really a Monster?*, a collection of essays in which they criticised Jung Chang and Halliday for their unremittingly negative approach. One of the main contributors, the distinguished scholar Jonathan Spence, wrote:

EXTRACT 2

From Jonathan D. Spence, 'Portrait of a Monster' in Gregor Benton and Lin Chun, editors, *Was Mao Really a Monster?*, Routledge, 2010, p. 39.

By focusing so tightly on Mao's vileness – to the exclusion of other factors – the authors undermine much of the power their story might have had. By seeking

to demonstrate that Mao started out as a vile person and stayed vile throughout his life, the authors deny any room for change, whether growth or degeneration, for subtlety or the possibilities of redemption.

Jung Chang's book and the response it aroused drew attention to what biographers had already said about Mao. Lee Feigon, an American analyst, had defended Mao's record.

EXTRACT 3

From Lee Feigon, *Mao: A Reinterpretation*, Ivan R. Dee, 2002, p. 83.

Mao was a great leader who transformed China. In a post socialist age, Mao still ranks as a socialist hero. In an anti-totalitarian time, Mao can still inspire awe for his struggles against bureaucracy and his efforts to educate and empower the common people.

A celebrated writer, Delia Davin, while acknowledging Mao's destructive policies, has also pointed to his achievements.

EXTRACT 4

From Delia Davin, *Mao Zedong*, Sutton Publishing, 1997, p. 106.

The revolution that Mao led unified China, began to modernize the economy and made the country a power to reckon with in the world. It also brought enormous improvements to the lives of many, raising life expectancy and standards of living and of health and education. But Mao's utopian dreams, his periodic refusal to engage with reality also resulted in millions of deaths.

Philip Short, arguably Mao Zedong's most authoritative biographer, suggested that Mao had to be viewed in a balanced way and that any assessment of Mao's true stature should be a matter of waiting to see how China developed.

EXTRACT 5

From Philip Short, *Mao: A Life*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1999, p. 633.

Mao's legacy was to clear the way for less visionary, more practical men to build the shining future that he could never achieve. Mao ruled for twenty-seven years. If the past, as he believed, is indeed a mirror for the present, will the twenty-first century mark the start of a Chinese golden age for which the Maoist dictatorship will have opened the way? Or will he be remembered as a flawed colossus, who brought fundamental change that only a handful of others had managed in all the years of China's history, but then failed to follow through?

? What contradictory pictures of Mao emerge from the views of the writers represented in Extracts 1–5?

Chapter summary

Believing that the integrity of the PRC as a sovereign state depended on full control of its own territories, Deng was concerned to secure China's border regions, which in turn served as a basis for China's extending its influence into neighbouring areas and becoming a strong regional power in Asia. It was also in Deng's time that the PRC pushed even further afield into Africa. As a realist, Deng appreciated that if he was to achieve his basic objective of turning China into a modern industrial and trading nation, it was essential that it be on cooperative terms with the world's commercial powers. That was why he took steps to reconcile the PRC with its former foes, principally Japan, the USA and Britain. The PRC's negotiations with Britain led to one of his greatest successes, the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997. How far Deng had elevated the status and reputation of the PRC since 1978 was illustrated by its membership of such international bodies as the IMF and the WTO. Already a member of the UN Security Council since 1971, China was poised by the time of Deng's death in 1997 to become a leading global power.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. How did the PRC consolidate its hold on its border regions?
2. How did the PRC seek to establish itself as a regional power in Asia?
3. Why was Tibet an intractable problem for the PRC?
4. Why did the PRC sign the 1978 Treaty of Friendship with Japan?
5. Why was Deng's China regarded as a Most Favored Nation by the USA?
6. How did the PRC adapt to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991?
7. What were the key features of the Joint Declaration?
8. What steps did Deng take to resolve the issues of a) Hong Kong and b) Taiwan?
9. Why, by 1997, was Deng willing to join the IMF and the World Bank?
10. In what ways did Deng's China expand its influence in Africa?
11. How high was the PRC's standing in international affairs at the time of Deng Xiaoping's death in 1997?
12. What were the main features of Deng Xiaoping's legacy in foreign affairs?
13. In what ways did Jiang Zemin build on the work of Deng Xiaoping?

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1 'Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966 in order to preserve his power within the party and government.' How far do you agree with this statement?

2 How far do you agree that social and economic conditions improved for the mass of the Chinese people in the years of the Cultural Revolution, 1966–76?

INTERPRETATION QUESTION

1 Evaluate the interpretations in both of the passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an assessment of Mao's impact on China.

PASSAGE A

Like Stalin and Hitler, Mao was a titan and tyrant of the twentieth century who transformed his country, sometimes through extraordinary feats of will and often at terrible cost. Like his fellow dictators he realized long-cherished dreams of national revival only to turn them into nightmares. HIS GREAT LEAP FORWARD and CULTURAL REVOLUTION cost millions of lives; they were disasters on an epic scale. He raised his people up as no other leader of modern China but left them broken, traumatised and scarred. Much of his long reign was a tragedy – the more so for the fact that it began with an extraordinary revolutionary victory which boosted China's international status, unified continental China and saw spirited attempts to make a new society.

Mao's crimes have not been exposed in the way those of Hitler and Stalin have. Their deeds have long been the subject of examination; they are widely regarded as negative examples, as leaders of a kind that must never be allowed to seize power in their countries again. There have been no such developments in China. There has been no reckoning, no thorough investigation of the Chairman's reign. Such an undertaking has not been permitted on the grounds that it might cause the Communist Party to be swept into oblivion along with the reputation of its former leader.

(Adapted from Graham Hutchings, Modern China, *Penguin Books, 2001.)*

PASSAGE B

Nothing has damaged Mao's image as much as his role in initiating the Cultural Revolution, yet few of Mao's actions deserve as much praise. From today's perspective it is hard to understand why many still condemn a movement that not only battled corruption and streamlined bureaucracy but also strengthened the economy and promoted artistic and educational reform. Far from being the wasted decade, as it is usually called, the movement inaugurated a period of cultural and economic growth which set the stage for the celebrated transformation of China's financial system that has been much ballyhooed since Mao's death. The decade dominated by the Cultural Revolution left an enduring legacy of social justice, feminist ideals, and even democratic principles which today still resonate with many Chinese.

The positive impact of Mao's exercise in political engineering cannot be underestimated. Not only did he succeed in ousting more than 70 percent of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, he also reduced and decentralized the Soviet-style bureaucracy that was threatening to choke China, pruning it to one-sixth its former size. The impact of this bureaucratic clean up was far-reaching, with especially salubrious effects on China's economy. By managing to remove the central government from much of the day-to-day functioning of the economy, Mao, contrary to popular views, not only spiked the growth of Chinese industry during the Cultural Revolution period but also made it impossible for his successors to re-establish a Soviet-style economy in China after his death.

(Adapted from Lee Feigon, Mao: A Reinterpretation, *Ivan R. Dee, 2002.)*

CHAPTER 9

Deng Xiaoping

Deng Xiaoping emerged victorious from the power struggle after Mao's death, having removed or outflanked the other contenders. As the paramount figure in Chinese politics, Deng set about updating the economy through 'Four Modernisations'. However, he made no political concessions; a democracy movement formed, which climaxed with the occupation of Tiananmen Square, a protest that was violently crushed by Deng. Undeterred by the demonstration, Deng proceeded on his reforming path. By the time of his death, he had made China an economic and commercial giant. These themes are covered under three headings:

- ★ The power struggle after Mao's death
- ★ Economic reform: Deng's Four Modernisations
- ★ Political repression and the pro-democracy movement 1979–89

Key dates

1976	Gang of Four arrested
1977–8	Deng returned to prominence
1978	Third Plenum convened
1979	Pro-democracy movement began
	Wei Jingsheng imprisoned
1981	Sentencing of the Gang of Four
1986	Protests in China's leading universities
1989	Death of Hu Yaobang
	Mikhail Gorbachev visited China
	Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstration crushed
1993	Tibetan Rising
1997	Death of Deng Xiaoping

1 The power struggle after Mao's death

- ▶ *Who were the main contenders for power in party and government after the death of Mao?*
- ▶ *Why had Deng emerged as leader by 1978?*

With the death of Mao Zedong in September 1976, the power struggle within the party that had gone on behind the scenes became an open conflict.

The rivals

There were three principal contestants:

- the moderate Hua Guofeng whom Mao had nominated as his successor
- the Gang of Four, led by Jiang Qing
- the pragmatist Deng Xiaoping, who had survived being purged and demoted during the Cultural Revolution.

At Mao's funeral, which was accompanied by displays of mass lamentation, there were indications that the manoeuvring for position among the party leaders had already begun. Appearances matter greatly in Chinese politics. How prominent a role individuals played in the funeral ceremonies was a good indication of their place in the party hierarchy. That **Hua Guofeng** delivered the main funeral eulogy was a clear sign that he had precedence over Jiang Qing, whose unseemly behaviour at Mao's lying in state, when she had fought with one of her cousins over the right to lay a wreath, had led the organisers of the ceremony to entrust her with only a minor role in the proceedings.

KEY FIGURE

Hua Guofeng (1921–2008)

A diligent but unspectacular CCP member from Mao's home province of Hunan.

Hua Guofeng

'With you in charge, my heart is at ease': these were the last intelligible words that Mao Zedong was reported to have uttered before he fell into a final coma. They were addressed to Hua Guofeng whom Mao, in the month before his death, had nominated as his successor as party chairman. Before then, Hua had been a little-known official with no substantial following in the party. As Mao grew more frail, his thinking appears to have been that with Zhou Enlai and Zhu De both now dead, and Deng Xiaoping again demoted, there was no longer an obvious heir to the leadership of China. It was far better, therefore, to give authority to someone whose record, while undistinguished, had been one of unswerving Maoist loyalties.

The Gang of Four

It is noteworthy that Mao Zedong had not considered entrusting power to the Gang of Four. This suggests that despite the ferocity with which Jiang Qing and her followers had tried to enforce their concept of Maoist orthodoxy on China, Mao himself had always been suspicious of their motives. His personal estrangement from Jiang – they lived apart for the final ten years of Mao's life – may well have been caused in part by their political differences.

Immediately following Mao's death, the sixteen-member Politburo split into two identifiable groups: the Gang of Four and the supporters of Hua Guofeng. Since the Gang were in a minority, they were bound to lose in any straight vote. But while the Politburo was undoubtedly the dominant body politically, there was always the possibility that its power could be neutralised by a direct resort to military force. This was where Hua Guofeng's previous dealings with the army stood him in good stead. His close relationship with a number of generals,

KEY FIGURES

Wang Dongxing (1916–2015)
Head of China's special security forces and Mao Zedong's chief bodyguard during the Cultural Revolution.

Ye Jianying (1897–1986)
Chief of Beijing's armed forces.

Mao Yuanxin (1941–)
Acted as Mao Zedong's liaison officer before Mao's death.

in particular **Wang Dongxing** and **Ye Jianying**, enabled him to outflank the Gang of Four.

Military opposition to the Gang of Four

Wang had earlier been an associate of the Gang of Four but had never fully committed himself to their side. This was largely because he found Jiang Qing's hectoring style deeply distasteful. A similar personal dislike of Jiang had also pushed Marshal Ye into direct opposition to the Gang of Four. It was also significant that Mao, during his last year, had made Ye a close confidant, warning him of Jiang's overweening ambitions. At Mao's death, therefore, both Wang Dongxing and Marshal Ye were prepared to prevent the Gang of Four from seizing power.

How little influence the Gang had in Beijing was shown when Jiang Qing's main military supporter, **Mao Yuanxin**, a nephew of Mao Zedong, was dismissed from his Beijing post by Ye Jianying. Mao Yuanxin had been given responsibility for collecting his late uncle's papers; Jiang had tried to bribe him into either finding evidence among these that Mao Zedong had entrusted his revolution to the Gang of Four or providing reliable forgeries to the same effect. But with Mao Yuanxin's removal this particular ruse was blocked.

Gang of Four outmanoeuvred

Jiang Qing's other main hope had been that Wang Hongwen, one of the Gang of Four who held a government post in Beijing, would be able to organise support for the Gang in other parts of China. Fearing that this might happen, Ye and Wang Dongxing deployed selected units of the armed forces in Beijing and other key areas to forestall possible 'counter-revolution'. Hua then invited the Gang of Four to a rearranged Politburo meeting on 6 October. Each of the four was given a different time for the start of the meeting. When the three male members of the Gang arrived at their separate times they were immediately arrested. Before she had time to leave for the meeting, Jiang Qing was seized in her own home and bundled off to prison shouting obscenities at her captors.

Re-emergence of Deng Xiaoping

The ousting of the Gang of Four seemed to indicate that Hua Guofeng had inherited Mao Zedong's authority. But appearances proved deceptive. The real beneficiary of the events proved to be someone who had played no direct part in them – Deng Xiaoping. Despite his earlier demotion during the Cultural Revolution, Deng had retained the highest reputation and the largest following in the party. This allowed him to play a waiting game during the power struggle. He did not need to challenge Hua Guofeng openly; he felt he could rely on Hua's lack of a committed following in the party to deny him full power. It proved a shrewd calculation. Hua found his newly acquired authority within the party hard to sustain. There was a broad feeling among members that his position as chairman was not permanent; he was merely a caretaker. In contrast, Deng's

strength lay in his reputation and his range of personal contacts with leading figures in the party and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Now that Mao had gone and the Gang of Four had been removed, there was no one who could match Deng's personal standing.

Deng's military backing

Deng was a natural survivor; he had an instinctive feel for politics, an ability to read situations and befriend the right people. One such was General **Xu Shiyou**. Following his strategic withdrawal from Beijing, Deng had put himself under the protection of Xu, a determined opponent of the Gang of Four and no supporter of Hua Guofeng. Xu's influence was strong throughout the southern and eastern provinces, which were the most prosperous and economically advanced areas of China. He used his contacts with the leading Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials in these regions to press for Deng's reinstatement in the Politburo. Since Deng's earlier dismissal could be blamed on the intrigues of the now disgraced Gang of Four, this proved relatively easy to achieve.

KEY FIGURE

Xu Shiyou (1905–85)
PLA general and the military governor of Guangzhou.

The most significant figure at this juncture was Ye Jianying. His support for Hua Guofeng had been provisional. He had backed him in order to overthrow the Gang of Four; this accomplished, his allegiance passed from Hua to Deng Xiaoping. In the Politburo, Ye became the chief spokesman for all those regional party leaders who demanded that Deng's value to the party and the nation should be recognised by his readmittance. Deng bided his time, not returning to Beijing until he was convinced that the Politburo's invitation to rejoin provided a genuine opportunity for him to regain power at the centre of things.

Deng's return

By March 1977, the Politburo had been persuaded to make two critical decisions which effectively saw Deng Xiaoping return to centre stage:

- In January, the Politburo agreed to drop the criticism that had led to Deng's earlier expulsion; namely, that he had been guilty of **'antagonistic contradiction'**.
- In March, it was formally decided that Deng should be restored to his place on the Politburo and to his position as vice-chairman of the State Council. Deng returned to Beijing in April 1977. By July, he had resumed his role as CCP general secretary.

KEY TERM

'Antagonistic contradiction' Aggressive opposition to party policy.

Deng's leadership qualities

Hua did not step down immediately. He retained his position as premier until 1978, but his political strength was leaking away. The majority of new members elected to provincial and national party committees were Deng's supporters. Hua attempted a rearguard action by appealing for support to the PLA, but Deng's popularity with the army was too strong to be seriously undermined. What added to Deng's strength was his record as an economic planner, having worked with Liu Shaoqi to end the great famine (see page 188)

and with Zhou Enlai in the early 1970s on a major programme for industrial growth. Deng's record in foreign affairs was also a great asset. Having served as assistant to China's great statesman, Zhou Enlai, the PRC's chief spokesman and negotiator from 1949 to 1976, Deng had gained an impressive reputation in foreign affairs. So it was that when Deng returned to the political fore he had attributes and successes to his name that no party rival could match:

- long experience at the heart of Chinese politics
- exceptional political skills
- genuine popularity within the CCP
- support among leading party officials at the centre and in the provinces
- close relations with key military leaders
- success in ending the famine in the 1960s
- high standing as a representative of the PRC in international affairs.

From 1978 to his death in 1997, Deng Xiaoping was the dominant force in China. In that time he would prove to have been as remarkable and important a leader as Mao. Believing that Mao's economic policies had been fundamentally mistaken, Deng restructured Chinese agriculture and industry in such a way that he laid the basis for China's development as a modern nation, capable of competing commercially with the major world economies. The process began with his victory at the Third **Plenum** in 1978.

KEY TERM

Plenum A full, formal, authoritative gathering of the CCP.

The Third Plenum 1978

The first significant meeting of the CCP to gather after Mao's death was the Third Plenum of the Central Committee. Convened in December 1978, it proved to be a landmark in China's post-Mao reformation. The following decisions reached at the Plenum marked a new departure for the PRC:

- The resolution 'to restore party democracy' began the process of rehabilitating those who had been wrongly condemned during the Maoist purges of the 1960s and 1970s.
- The Plenum confirmed Deng's leadership of China by appointing him chairman of the People's Political Consultative Conference (PPCC), an organisation that was given the principal responsibility for economic reform in China.
- The Plenum accepted Deng's 'Four Modernisations' as the basis for China's development (see page 234).

These resolutions clearly meant that the Cultural Revolution had been abandoned. Deng Xiaoping's personal success at the Plenum, in obtaining the full support of the CCP for his proposals, was soon recognised by the CCP by its awarding him the honorary title of 'paramount leader'. The title conferred no specific powers on Deng but that made it all the more valuable to him since it placed no restrictions on his leadership. He was now in a position to begin what has become known as the Deng revolution.

Undoing Mao's legacy

Since the early 1960s, when he had tackled the famine in China (see page 188), Deng had regarded the policies of the Great Leap Forward as basically wrong; they had produced not growth but stagnation. Now that he was in power he was resolved to remove the remnants of Maoism that restricted China's economic progress. He appealed to government and party to 'emancipate the mind, seek truth from facts, unite as one in looking to the future.' It was an implied criticism of all that Mao had represented: slavish adherence to theory and the ignoring of practicalities.

However, Deng was very conscious that Mao's cult had been so powerful that were it to be suddenly denounced it would cause bewilderment and disruption in China. Deng judged that the Chinese people would not be able to understand an attack on the 'Great Helmsman', the leader who had come to be regarded as a god. In the USSR, Stalin's record and reputation had become reviled within three years of his death in 1953 (see page 141). But there was to be no equivalent to de-Stalinisation in China. Any criticisms of Mao would be muted and subtle.

The Central Committee resolution 1981

Deng was also well aware that any attack on Mao would by implication be an attack on those who had served him. This would include all the current leaders of the government and the party. Far safer, therefore, to subject Mao's reputation to the **drip effect**. A CCP Central Committee resolution of 1981, drafted by Deng Xiaoping himself, observed that Mao Zedong had indeed been a great leader, but one who had made errors which China was now entitled to correct: 'It is true that he made gross mistakes during the Cultural Revolution, but, if we judge his activities as a whole, his contribution to the Chinese Revolution far outweighs his mistakes.' The party then declared that Mao in his policies had been 70 per cent right and 30 per cent wrong. This subtle mathematical formula left Deng and the government free to abandon Mao's policies while still appearing to be loyal to his memory.

KEY TERM

Drip effect Letting Mao's reputation gradually erode rather than formally attacking it.

The Trial of the Gang of Four 1980–1

The Central Committee resolution came after another event which provided Deng and the reformers with a convenient opportunity to condemn the old Maoist ways while still appearing to honour Mao himself. In November 1980, over four years after their arrest, the members of the Gang of Four were at last put on trial. The aim was to use them as scapegoats to explain why China had gone wrong. The general accusation was that they had betrayed Mao and the Chinese Revolution. Among the specific charges against them were that during the course of the Cultural Revolution they had been individually and collectively responsible for the deaths of 35,000 people and that they had 'framed and persecuted' a further 750,000. The trials ended in January 1981 with guilty verdicts on all those charged. Jiang was sentenced to death. Subsequently,

the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in order to give her 'time to repent'. But Jiang Qing was not the repenting kind; at the time of her death ten years later, in 1991, she was still angrily proclaiming her innocence.

The trials represented a final closure of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The sentencing of the Gang of Four was the new regime's way of admitting that Mao's extraordinary political and social experiment had been a lethal failure.

2 Economic reform: Deng's Four Modernisations

▶ *What was Deng Xiaoping's basic approach in economic matters?*

The Third Plenum in 1978 had accepted the Four Modernisations as the basis for all future economic planning. These were schemes which Deng had been working on since the 1960s but could not introduce until Mao had gone. They proposed the reform of:

- agriculture
- industry
- education
- defence.

Ideas behind the Four Modernisations

Throughout the 1970s, Deng had urged that realism, not theory, ought to prevail in the planning of China's economy. If a plan worked, keep it; if it did not, scrap it. If the **market** produced better results than rigid adherence to **socialist concepts**, then let the market operate freely. If contact with the capitalist West increased China's trade and commerce, then encourage such contact. This essentially practical approach was summed up in Deng's favourite saying; 'It does not matter whether a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice.'

During Mao's time, such apparent disregard for strict socialist planning was thought too extreme and was one of the reasons why Deng had become politically suspect. But with Mao gone and the Gang of Four, fierce opponents of the liberalising of the economy, removed, the time had come to apply Deng's ideas. In 1982, he defined his economic aims as follows:

- invigorating China's domestic economy
- opening Chinese trade to the outside world
- allowing the development of individual enterprises
- encouraging joint ventures with both Chinese and foreign investment.

KEY TERMS

Market The uncontrolled interplay of supply and demand.

Socialist concepts The structuring of the economy by the government with the aim of ending privilege and spreading equality.

Deng's 'hands off' policy

It was to be an essentially 'hands off' policy. The state would not entirely detach itself from economic planning. The state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that had been set up in Mao's time (see page 169) would remain the basic form of industrial organisation, but much greater freedom and initiative would be granted to managers and experts on the spot. **Dogma** would give place to practicality. Administrative concerns would not be allowed to overrule economic considerations. Bureaucracy would be the servant, not the master, of the Chinese economy. In explaining his reforms to the party Deng stressed that the various adjustments he was pressing for all rested on two essential changes:

- the restoration of the market as the chief mechanism by which the Chinese economy operated
- the opening of China to foreign trade.

The reforms themselves divide into two key sections and periods. Between 1978 and 1984, the main emphasis was on the improvement of agriculture and the rural economy. After 1984, attention shifted to the development of industry and commerce.

KEY TERMS

Dogma Rigid, unchanging belief in a particular approach.

Xiang The original village or township.

First Modernisation: agriculture

In the countryside, the commune was abandoned and replaced by the ***xiang***. The *xiang* would still be required to meet food production output quotas, but, instead of these being achieved by collective work units, individual peasants and their families would contribute their due share under a new 'household responsibility system'. Provided the peasants paid their taxes and contributed to the local quotas, they were left free to sell any surplus produce for private profit. As the figures in Table 9.1 show, this policy of privatisation had notable success in the early 1980s.

Table 9.1 China's agricultural record 1978–92

Year	Grain production (millions of tonnes)	Meat production (millions of tonnes)	Index of gross output compared to base of 100 in 1952
1978	304.8	8.6	229.6
1979	332.1	10.6	249.4
1980	320.6	12.1	259.1
1981	325.0	12.6	276.2
1982	354.5	13.5	306.8
1983	387.3	14.0	330.7
1984	407.3	15.4	373.1
1985	379.1	17.6	385.7
1986	391.5	19.2	398.9
1987	404.7	19.9	422.0
1988	394.1	21.9	438.5
1989	407.8	23.3	452.0

Problems created by land reform

The undoubted benefits that the ending of collectivisation brought the peasants were offset by the continuing uncertainty about their property rights. The great majority of farmers in China still held their farms on a fifteen-year lease. Privatisation did not grant permanent ownership in most cases. The legal position was that after fifteen years the land would revert back to the state. It is true that the government promised to consider extending the leases, but the bitter experiences of the Chinese peasants in the twentieth century had taught them to distrust government promises.

Doubts about the security of their land holding deterred the peasants from improving their farms or investing for long-term growth. Hence, the traditional but inefficient methods continued to prevail at the very time when the government believed its land reforms would lead farmers to embrace modernisation and expansion.

Second and Third Modernisations: industry and education

The relative success that had been achieved in agriculture by the mid-1980s enabled Deng and the government to turn their attention to industry. Here, he combined two of the modernisations. With the aim of promoting industrial growth and scientific education, the universities were greatly expanded in size and number. The plan was to train a million technical students to become the managers and administrators of the new economy. The same objective underlay the schemes for sending thousands of Chinese students to study abroad; this was the means by which China would gain direct knowledge of Western technology and industrial expertise.

Regional variations

The intention was that the students would then return to China to apply their training and experience to the development of **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)**. The first four SEZs were Shantou and Xiamen in the north, and Shenzen and Zhuhai in the south. SEZs became China's chief commercial outlets, modelled, although this was not officially acknowledged, on the Hong Kong pattern (see page 260). They were given regional autonomy and granted special tax concessions and financial freedoms to enable them to fulfil Deng's plea that the nation open up its commerce to the world. SEZs proved to be one of modern China's success stories. Between 1978 and 1989 China's international trade flourished; exports grew by over 500 per cent and foreign investment in China quadrupled.

Deng's **pragmatism** in economic matters was evident in all this. He had observed that where the younger and more progressive party officials had been allowed to put their ideas into practice the results had been strikingly successful. Two particular provinces, Sichuan and Guangdong, had witnessed major increases in productivity and output. Deng was greatly impressed by the way

KEY TERMS

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) The areas containing China's main export industries and companies, which were earmarked for immediate and concentrated development.

Pragmatism A way of tackling problems based on the actual situation rather than on abstract theory.

Table 9.2 China's imports and exports balance, 1978–89 (in billions of US dollars)

Year	Imports	Exports
1978	10.9	9.8
1979	15.7	13.7
1980	20.0	18.1
1981	22.0	22.0
1982	19.3	22.3
1983	21.4	22.2
1984	27.4	26.1
1985	42.3	27.4
1986	42.9	30.9
1987	43.2	39.4
1988	55.3	47.5
1989	59.1	52.5

the young managers in these regions had achieved greater output and improved quality of product by introducing wage incentives to encourage the workers to develop efficient work practices and attain higher skill levels.

Problems

It was in regard to incentives that a major problem arose for Deng's reformers. Although the methods followed in Mao's SOEs had not encouraged genuine growth, they had provided the workers with an 'iron rice bowl' (see page 169). Deng's changes, however, meant that workers and companies no longer enjoyed guaranteed incomes. Freedom from state control also meant the end of **state subsidies**. The SOEs were now expected to become efficient and competitive. Cost-saving schemes were to be introduced as means of achieving higher and cheaper output. New short-term contracts that were aimed at improving **productivity** meant that the employees would now be paid according to performance and would retain their jobs only if they contributed genuinely to the enterprise. There were no guaranteed jobs anymore.

Resistance from the SOEs

Not surprisingly, the modernisation schemes met strong resistance from the SOEs. No matter how much the reformers emphasised the virtues of the new proposals, the workers were unwilling to lose their 'iron rice bowl' and were slow to cooperate. This reluctance meant that the intended reforms took far longer to implement than had been planned. It took until 1986 to get a modified **labour-contract scheme** operating and then it applied only to new employees, not to established workers. The government offered further concessions in the form of unemployment insurance, but six years later the scheme covered barely one-fifth of the 80 million employees in the SOEs.

Such resistance to new ideas did not prevent progress towards industrial modernisation but it did slow it down. This indicated that in a country the size of China, with its conservative attitude among the workers and its regional variations, centralised economic planning would always be difficult to achieve. The actual success that was achieved is evident in Table 9.3 (overleaf).

KEY TERMS

State subsidies A scheme of payments, introduced in Mao's time, to supplement workers' or businesses' low income.

Productivity The efficiency with which an article is manufactured, measured by the time and cost involved in its production.

Labour-contract scheme An agreement between employers and workers, based on the principle of higher wages in return for greater effort and higher productivity.

Fourth Modernisation: defence

The Four Modernisations were treated by Deng not as discrete items but as parts of an interlocking programme. Defence, like education, was integrated into his overall economic strategy. Three main considerations shaped his approach towards the issue:

- One was that compliant and cooperative armed services were essential politically. Deng was well aware that the PLA had held the key both to the Cultural Revolution and to his successful leadership bid following the death of Mao. His defeat of the Gang of Four and his ousting of Hua Guofeng could not have been accomplished without the backing of the military.

Table 9.3 China's industrial performance 1979–89

Year	GDP* (in millions of yuan)	GDP growth rate (annual %)	Inflation rate (annual %)	Growth in manufacturing output (annual %)
1979	732.6	7.6	6.1	8.6
1980	790.5	7.9	–1.5	11.9
1981	826.1	4.5	7.0	1.6
1982	896.3	8.5	11.5	5.5
1983	987.7	10.2	8.3	9.2
1984	1130.9	14.5	12.9	14.5
1985	1276.8	12.9	1.8	18.1
1986	1385.4	8.5	3.3	8.3
1987	1539.1	11.1	4.7	12.7
1988	1713.1	11.3	2.5	15.8
1989	1786.7	4.3	3.1	4.9

* GDP: gross domestic product. The total value of the goods produced in a country in one year.

- A second was that Deng also regarded a modernised army with up-to-date weaponry as an essential requirement for China. It was not a matter of choice. If China was to achieve growth and parity with the other world powers it had to be militarily strong. Having developed a hydrogen bomb by 1967, the PRC had become a superpower.
- However, a third consideration entered into it. In terms of funding, defence was the last of the Four Modernisations. Deng judged that, to invigorate the economy in the way he intended, priority expenditure had to go on industry and infrastructure; the PRC could not afford heavy military spending.

Deng's solution to the problem of allocating resources was to cut the military budget. He stressed that this would not weaken the military since the cut would be accompanied by a streamlining of the armed services to make them more efficient at less cost. In pursuit of this objective, troop numbers were cut in stages so that by 1990 the PLA had been reduced by 1 million to a national force of 3.5 million. The reduction was made less painful by absorbing the laid-off soldiers into an expanded **People's Armed Police (PAP)**. Deng coined the slogan 'People's defence in modern conditions', his way of suggesting that, despite financial constraints, China's defence forces would be equipped with the sophisticated weaponry necessary in modern warfare.

KEY TERM

People's Armed Police (PAP) Technically a civilian police force, but, since the majority of members were ex-service personnel, it was essentially a wing of the PLA.

Deng's argument about the need for reform of the services was given weight when the PLA performed poorly after entering Vietnam in 1979 in support of Pol Pot's Cambodia in its war with Vietnam (see page 253).

Impact of Deng's economic policies

An idea of the impact of Deng's reforms on China's economy can be gained from the following figures. The PRC was undergoing a construction boom. A foreign visitor in 1995 remarked that urban China was a vast building site:

- Between 1981 and 2000, China's economic growth averaged nine per cent every year.
- By 2000, the USA was in financial debt to the PRC.
- In 2000, fourteen per cent of the USA's imports were from China.

By 2000, China was consuming:

- 29 per cent of the world's steel
- 36 per cent of the world's rice
- 54 per cent of the world's cement.

Table 9.4 Production of major resources in the PRC in 1969 and 1986

Resource	1969	1986
Coal (tonnes)	61,875,000	870,000,000
Steel (tonnes)	923,000	52,050,000
Electricity (kW hours)	5,955,000	445,500,000
Oil (tonnes)	0	131,000,000
Sulphuric acid (tonnes)	227,000	7,700,000
Cereals (tonnes)	138,700,000	391,000,000

What growth trends during Deng's period of leadership can be identified in Table 9.4?

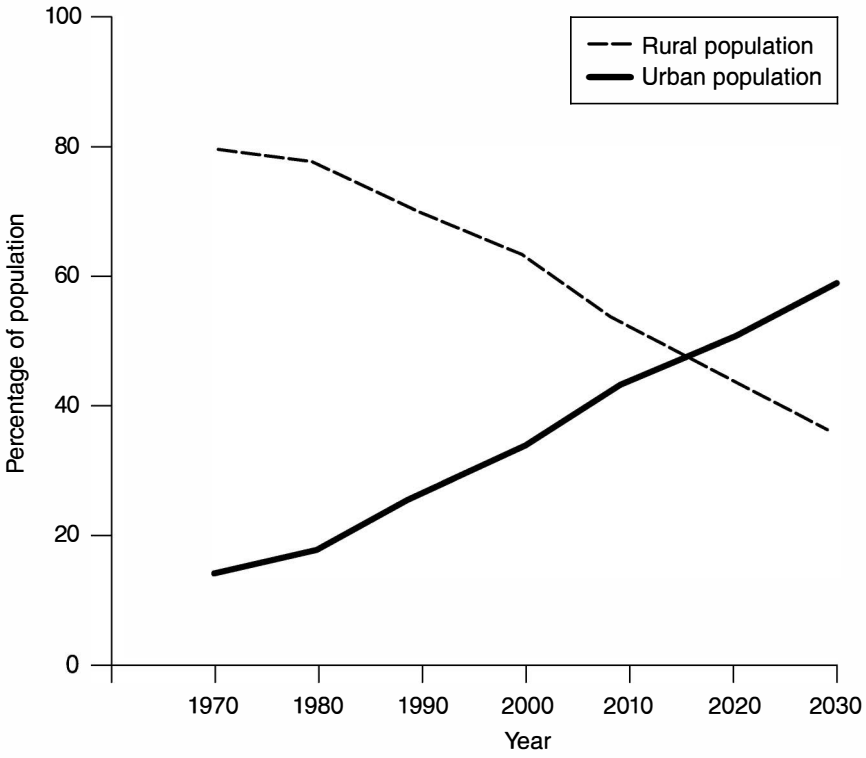


Figure 9.1 China's rising and shifting population since 1970 with a projection to 2030.

The rise of the middle class

One of the most notable consequences of Deng's reforms was the growth in China's middle class. With the structure of Chinese society shifting from rural to urban, from agricultural to industrial, the opportunity for individuals and groups to earn money in the new industries that expanded under Deng's schemes was greatly increased. Mao had made much of the fact that he had led a peasant revolution, but he had been well aware that China's progress ultimately depended on the development of industry. Where Deng differed from him was not in the aim but in the method. Deng rejected Mao's notion of growth through mass effort and equal wages, believing that this had proved inefficient. Deng replaced it with a programme of incentives and applied expertise. This provided a major impetus to the spread of the middle class, best defined as people with particular skills and knowledge who were given the freedom to pursue their own economic aspirations and earn their own rewards. Typical of this class were those with entrepreneurial talents who were now encouraged to create companies and enterprises. The expansion of industry and commerce required such personnel as:

- managers
- planners
- bankers and financiers
- manufacturers
- engineers
- business people
- lawyers.

These were the categories of activity which historically had produced an influential and powerful middle class in the Western nations during the **Industrial Revolution**. China now began to experience the same phenomenon. The outstanding feature of members of the middle class, and the one which distinguished them from ordinary workers and peasants, was their possession of **disposable income**. It was this surplus money that enabled them to become big spenders. Their **purchasing power** provided a massive fillip to the Chinese economy. Their increasing demand for goods, which expanded into a demand for better housing and an improved infrastructure, stimulated manufacturing, construction and all the contributory activities associated with their provision. As middle-class taste in food, clothing, entertainment and lifestyle became more sophisticated, a greater range and higher quality of products had to be provided. To cater to these new tastes, shops, stores and Western-style boutiques and fast-food outlets sprang up in the major cities as consumer demand led to a construction boom. Motorcars, which rapidly replaced bicycles as the chief means of urban transport, necessitated a huge road building programme that rapidly changed the physical appearance and character of urban China.

KEY TERMS

Industrial Revolution
The economic expansion, beginning around the mid-eighteenth century in Western Europe and the USA, creating huge wealth and leading to colonial expansion.

Disposable income
The amount of earnings that remains after the basic costs of living have been met, giving the holders the ability to spend or invest the surplus.

Purchasing power
The capacity to buy goods and items.

How significant the middle class became in Deng's China is evident from the statistics:

- In 1980, barely one per cent of Chinese households were middle class.
- By 1997, this had risen to twelve per cent.
- By 2012, the figure was 60 per cent.
- Projections suggest that by 2020, 75 per cent of urban households will be middle class.

The extraordinary outcome of Deng's reforms was that China became a middle-class, consumer society. The rise of the middle class under Deng was a social revolution, which was both the cause and effect of an economic lift-off that led to China's emergence as a commercial and financial global power at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

3 Political repression and the pro-democracy movement 1979–89

▶ *Why was Deng so determined to resist political reform in China?*

Deng Xiaoping's opposition to political reform

An important point to stress is that Deng's programme for regenerating China was as much concerned with political conservatism as it was with economic progress. He had emphasised this strongly when introducing his reforms by balancing the Four Modernisations with the 'Four Cardinal Principles', which he defined as:

- 'keeping to the socialist road'
- 'upholding the people's democratic dictatorship'
- 'upholding leadership by the Communist Party'
- 'upholding Marxism–Leninism and Mao Zedong thought'.

The striking feature of these principles was that, unlike the Four Modernisations, they were a formula not for change but for the maintenance of the existing political structure. They were essentially a restating of the concept of democratic centralism, the idea that the CCP as the voice of Marxist correctness was entitled to the obedience of the people (see page 87). Deng emphasised that China should strive for 'socialist modernisation', rather than other forms of modernisation, adding 'We should take a clear-cut stand to uphold the Four Cardinal Principles and carry out a protracted struggle against bourgeois liberalization.'

As Deng saw it, China's first need was for internal stability; without this the nation could not modernise and take its proper place in the world. He said that

China, having just gone through the bitter experience of the Cultural Revolution, needed a rest from politics. He meant by this that China should move away from debate and discussion and devote itself to the task of making itself a powerful economic nation. 'Our task is to build up the country, and less important things should be subordinated to it.'

It was Deng's thinking that inspired a 1980 resolution of the National People's Congress which condemned the liberal view that the people 'have the right to speak out freely, air their views fully, and hold great debates'. China could not afford to indulge in popular democracy along Western lines. It would merely cause distraction and disruption.

Deng Xiaoping was a reformer, but only in the economic sphere. In politics, he was a Communist hardliner. His aim was to restore the morale and standing of the CCP after the disruptive decades of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. He wanted to show that the Communist Party was still capable of governing China and had the right to the loyalty of the people. Like Mao Zedong, he was part product, part creator, of the turbulent history of China through which he had lived since the 1920s. His belief in the authority of the CCP as the only legitimate shaper of China's destinies was unshakeable. It was this conviction that made a major showdown between the old-guard CCP and the supporters of democracy increasingly likely.

The 'democracy wall'

In the Avenue of Eternal Peace, near Tiananmen Square, there stretched a 200-metre brick wall. In the late 1970s, the Avenue became a common gathering place for students, who established the practice of affixing to the wall a mass of literature from small personal letters to large posters. The writings covered every conceivable subject and gave an obvious opportunity for the public expression of anti-government and anti-party feelings. Periodically, the government forbade the 'democracy wall' to be used in this way; it ordered the posters to be torn down and had the more outspoken of the critics arrested.

One such occasion occurred early in 1979 when **Wei Jingsheng**, a former Red Guard, used the wall as part of his personal campaign to call the government to account for its failure to introduce democratic freedoms into China. He was particularly critical of the PRC's recent foreign policy blunders. When Wei sought to reveal details of China's disastrous showing in Vietnam (see page 251), he was arrested and sentenced to eighteen years in prison.

KEY FIGURE

Wei Jingsheng (1950–)

The son of CCP cadres, Wei was angered by Deng's failure to follow liberal policies. His dissident views earned him a series of prison terms. Exiled in the USA, he continued to expose the PRC's grim human rights record.

The democracy movement

Wei may be regarded as the first martyr in what became known as 'the democracy movement'. This was never an organised party and its numbers fluctuated, but it broadly represented those intellectuals who saw in Deng's reforms the opportunity not only to modernise the economy but to liberalise

the political system. The democracy movement did not initially challenge the authority of the CCP. What it urged was that Deng and the government should honour the Communist principles that they supposedly espoused. In particular, it asked that the party's commitment to the rule of the people should not merely be a slogan but should be genuinely upheld by extending Deng Xiaoping's 'Four Cardinal Principles' to include a fifth: the adoption of democracy. Wei Jingshen had been the first to ask on a wall poster why there was no Fifth Modernisation (Source A).

SOURCE A

From the Fifth Modernization, Wei's essay posted on the democracy wall in 1978, quoted in Wei Jingsheng, *The Courage to Stand Alone: Letters from Prison*, Penguin, 1997, p. 208.

Those who worry that democracy will lead to anarchy and chaos are just like those who, following the overthrow of the Qing dynasty, worried that without an emperor the country would fall into chaos. Their decision was to patiently suffer oppression because they feared that without the weight of oppression, their spines might completely collapse! To such people, I would like to say, with all due respect: We want to be the masters of our own destiny. We need no gods or emperors and we don't believe in saviors of any kind. We do not want to serve as mere tools of dictators with personal ambitions for carrying out modernization. We want to modernize the lives of the people. Democracy, freedom, and happiness for all are our sole objectives.

According to Source A, what are the characteristics of the 'Fifth Modernisation'? ?

For long periods the democrats were broadly tolerated, but they were always likely to be turned against whenever the government felt that their objections had gone too far. This explains the harshness of Wei Jingsheng's punishment. It was intended as a warning to those intellectuals and journalists who mistakenly believed that it had become permissible in post-Mao China to criticise the party and government.

Charges of corruption against the government

The charge which most disturbed the authorities was that government in China had become corrupt. In the late 1970s, a notorious case of racketeering came to light in Heilongjiang province when it was revealed that the managers of a state-owned fuel and power company had been diverting large sums of public money into their own pockets. The chief embezzlers were put on public trial and then executed.

The government expected to gain credit from this widely publicised example of its resolute response. Yet the fact was that the scandal had come to light only through the tenacity of an investigative journalist whose exposé forced the authorities to take action. Furthermore, the chief culprits in the Heilongjiang case were all leading members of the provincial CCP. Critics began to ask just how widespread corruption was within the party.

Demonstrations spread

The belief that there was something implicitly corrupt about the CCP's management of China underlay the series of student demonstrations that occurred sporadically throughout the 1980s. The common demand of these protests was for greater political democracy and economic opportunity. Major disturbances occurred in 1986 in universities in Hefei, Wuhan and Shanghai. Thousands of students followed **Fang Lizhi** in calling for the open government and democracy that the authorities continually talked of but never delivered.

KEY FIGURES

Fang Lizhi (1936–2012)
A professor at Hefei University and a CCP member.

Hu Yaobang (1915–89)
A protégé of Deng Xiaoping, he had been a prominent figure in the party until his dismissal for being too sympathetic to the dissident students.

The government quelled the disturbances by dismissing Fang, arresting the ringleaders and characterising the troubles as the work of an anti-social minority. But how deeply the government had been shaken was evident in its removal of **Hu Yaobang** (Hu Yao-pang), the CCP general secretary. The party blamed Hu for having encouraged the student troubles by criticising the slow pace of political change.

Deng's rejection of democracy

After the crushing of the 1986 protests, Deng thought it appropriate to restate his rejection of 'bourgeois liberalisation'. He defined this as the mistaken notion that modernisation involved moving towards Western-style democracy. Deng spelled out why genuine democracy was not an option for the Chinese. In a country as large as China, with its huge population that was still largely uneducated, it was not practical to hold elections. 'We have to stick to the system of people's congresses, in which democratic centralism is applied.'

Deng's assertion captured the fundamental difference of outlook between the CCP hardliners and the pro-democracy movement. What Deng was declaring was that the uninformed people should be content to let their enlightened government lead them. However, for Chinese progressives this was no longer an acceptable attitude; they demanded that power and privilege in China should not be the monopoly of the leaders of the CCP. As democrats saw it, developments in China had shown that, left to itself, the government was incapable of providing those advances that they had come to expect and to which they believed the Chinese people were entitled.

Mounting frustration

For many Chinese, the economic reforms introduced by Deng in the period 1979–89 proved deeply disappointing. This was the result of a number of factors:

- After the initial economic spurt of the early 1980s there had been a serious downturn in agricultural and industrial production.
- The ending of the subsidy system had created uncertainty and anxiety among the workers and had removed the shield which had protected the urban dwellers from high prices.

- Inflation had reduced the workers' real wages.
- The growing population and the continuing movement of people from the countryside into the urban areas had led to severe overcrowding in the major cities.

These developments had undermined the improved standards of living that had been experienced in the early years of Deng's reforms. It seemed that aspirations had been raised only to be dashed. Students and intellectuals felt that, despite the promise of progress and reform held out by the modernisation programme, the Communist Party under Deng Xiaoping had failed to deliver.

Poor job prospects were a particular anxiety among the students. In the late 1970s, in accordance with the Four Modernisations programme, there had been an explosion in the numbers entering higher education. But a decade later it was evident that employment opportunities had failed to keep pace with the rising number of graduates. There was resentment that such jobs as were available were reserved for party members and their children. It was this grievance that fuelled the anger over government corruption.

The Tiananmen Square Massacre, June 1989

In Beijing, in the summer of 1989, a tragedy took place which shocked the world: the shooting on government orders of thousands of unarmed demonstrators in Tiananmen Square. The massacre was a violent climax to the tensions that had been building up since Mao's death. It was a product of basic problems in China that Deng's reforms, far from solving, had intensified.

The path to the massacre

On 15 April 1989, the death of Hu Yaobang focused the minds of all those who were unhappy with the economic and political system as it was operating under Deng Xiaoping. Hu had not always been sympathetic to the demands for greater democracy, but all that was forgotten at his passing. What was remembered was his removal from government in 1987 for daring to support the student protests. He had been forced to undergo self-criticism and had received such harsh treatment that his health had broken. Posthumously, he was elevated by the students into a symbol of resistance whose death from a heart attack was blamed on the harassment he had suffered for having upheld democratic values.

By the time of Hu's memorial service, a week after his death, large crowds had gathered in Tiananmen Square. They demonstrated noisily as three kneeling students tried to press a petition into the hands of Premier **Li Peng** and other government officials making their way into the **Great Hall of the People** to attend the service. The refusal of Li and his colleagues to accept the petition was taken as a sign of how far the government had become detached from the people. A series of sit-ins and boycotts of university classes quickly followed.

KEY FIGURE

Li Peng (1928–)
A Soviet-trained, hardline Communist, who was totally opposed to any concessions being made to the democracy movement.

KEY TERM

Great Hall of the People
A large parliament building on the west side of Tiananmen Square.

Demonstrators occupy Tiananmen Square

The number of protesters rose as students from over 40 universities in China came to join their fellows in Tiananmen Square. A particularly ominous portent for the government was the solidarity the transport workers showed with the students by allowing them to travel to Beijing without paying their fares. The ***People's Daily*** raised the temperature by denouncing the growing student occupation of the Square as the work of 'a small handful of plotters' who must be crushed immediately.

KEY TERM

People's Daily The official CCP newspaper, and the government's mouthpiece.

SOURCE B

From an editorial in the *People's Daily*, 25 April 1989, retrieved from the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 26 April 1989, p. 23.

If we are tolerant of this disturbance and let it go unchecked, a seriously chaotic state will appear. Then, the reform and opening up; the improvement of the economic environment and the rectification of the economic order, construction, and development will all become empty hopes. Even the tremendous achievements scored in the reform during the past decade may be completely lost, and the great aspiration of the revitalisation of China cherished by the whole nation will be hard to realise. A China with very good prospects and a very bright future will become a chaotic and unstable China without any future.

? According to Source B, why was Deng unwilling to tolerate open dissent?

KEY FIGURES

Zhao Ziyang (1919–2005)

CCP General Secretary (1986–9), a major economic reformer under Deng, he became distrusted by his government colleagues because of his apparent sympathy towards the democracy movement.

Mikhail Gorbachev (1931–)

The reforming leader of the Soviet Union between 1985 and 1991.

Zhao Ziyang's unsuccessful appeal

A prominent government figure, **Zhao Ziyang** tried to appease the protesters by making a public statement in which he suggested that the *People's Daily* had gone too far. But the demonstration in Tiananmen Square had begun to develop a momentum. By the second week of May, a group of 300 students had gone on hunger strike. For the first time the government made direct contact with student representatives, urging them to call off the strike. A number of China's leading writers added their voice to this appeal but at the same time pleaded with the government to recognise the protest as a genuinely democratic and patriotic movement.

Gorbachev's visit to Beijing

The demonstrators declined to abandon their protest because they believed that events had given them two advantages that they could exploit:

- The wide international media coverage that they were receiving, with foreign camera crews and journalists from every continent having taken up residence in the Square, would restrict the Chinese government's freedom of action.
- The government's hands would also be tied by the imminent arrival in Beijing of **Mikhail Gorbachev**, the first Russian leader to be invited to China since the Sino-Soviet rift. His visit explained the presence of the world's press in Beijing. The students revered Gorbachev as the progressive leader of a

socialist state who was introducing into his country the very reforms that they were demanding for China. They believed that while he was present in China the government would not dare to crush their demonstration.

Government attitudes harden

The protesters had overestimated the strength of their position. The visit of Gorbachev may have indeed delayed the authorities taking firm action but their anger at having to change his schedule made the hardliners still more resolute against the protesters. With Tiananmen Square now occupied by rebellious students, the plan to impress Gorbachev with the type of organised mass rally which the PRC customarily put on for important foreign visitors had to be curtailed. The talks between the Soviet and Chinese leaders did go ahead but in a strangely unreal atmosphere. What should have been a historic Sino-Soviet summit had been overshadowed; the truly historic events were happening in Tiananmen Square.

On 19 May, the sixth day of the hunger strike and the day that Gorbachev left China, Zhao Ziyang again went down to the Square to address the students. In tears, he promised them that the issues over which they were protesting would eventually be resolved. Li Peng also spoke briefly to the students, but his was a perfunctory visit; it seems that he and Deng Xiaoping had already decided that the demonstrations were to be ended by force. It was this that gave particular poignancy to Zhao's parting words to the students, 'I came too late, too late. We are too old to see the day when China is strong. But you are young. You should stay alive.'

Martial law imposed

That same evening Zhao was dismissed from his post and Li Peng, in a broadcast speech in which he condemned the students as 'rioters', formally declared the imposition of martial law. The news of the government's intention to apply 'firm and resolute measures to end the turmoil' rallied the students who had begun to waver. They voted to end the hunger strike but to continue their occupation of the Square. It is arguable that this is what the hardliners in the government wanted. Were the demonstrators to have peacefully dispersed at this point it would have deprived the authorities of the chance to make an example of them.

However, things did not go entirely the government's way. When news of the demonstrators' determination to stay in the Square became known, thousands who had earlier given up now returned, their numbers swelled by the ordinary people of Beijing. It was these Beijing residents who blocked the roads and avenues leading to Tiananmen and prevented the first wave of troops, sent to impose martial law, from reaching the Square. The troops were bewildered by this show of popular resistance. After discussions with the leaders of the demonstration the PLA commanders ordered their men to withdraw to the outskirts of Beijing.

The PLA moves in

These events proved to be merely the lull before the storm. With Zhao removed and Li Peng and Deng now prepared to exercise full authority, the plans for ending the protest were activated. Crack troops led by commanders specially appointed by President **Yang Shangkun** and Deng Xiaoping advanced on Beijing. By 2 June, 350,000 PLA soldiers had surrounded Tiananmen Square and had secured the routes leading to it. This time the troops were not to be deterred by the pleas of the local people.

KEY FIGURE

Yang Shangkun (1907–98)

President of the PRC and a leading figure in the PLA, he gave Deng his strong-arm support in crushing the student protest.

The PLA commanders described the action as a 'full military campaign' to overcome the determined resistance of the 'rebels' occupying Tiananmen Square. The troops were instructed to reclaim the Square 'at all costs'. Tanks and armoured personnel carriers rumbled into position. At 10.00p.m. on the night of 3 June the first shots were fired into the demonstrators. Shooting continued intermittently through the hours of darkness and into the morning. By midday on 4 June the occupation was over.

The scene was one of carnage. Twisted barricades crushed by the PLA tanks lay strewn around, mixed with the accumulated garbage of the five-week occupation. At regular intervals, lines of exhausted, injured and broken-spirited students were marched away for interrogation and imprisonment. The number of dead and injured will probably never be precisely known but calculations suggest that the figure ran into thousands. Included in the figures are the people killed in the surrounding streets and the PLA soldiers beaten to death by outraged crowds. Despite the news blackout that the government immediately imposed, the information that leaked out regarding the number of victims treated in Beijing's hospitals confirmed that a massacre had occurred.

In the following weeks, demonstrators who had escaped from Tiananmen but had not been able to flee the country were rounded up. Reprisals followed. Those identified as ringleaders were given stiff prison sentences. CCP officials who had shown sympathy for the protesters were dismissed for their wrong-headedness, while those who had resisted the demonstrators were promoted for their loyalty to the party.

The significance of the massacre

Looking at the Tiananmen protest in relation to the powers at the government's disposal, commentators have suggested that the demonstration could have been dispersed by organised police armed with no more than water cannons and tear gas. This was the normal way in which student riots were dealt with in Asian countries. The students were unarmed and far from united over how long their protest could be sustained. Indeed, there had been a number of occasions when they were on the verge of breaking up. It would not have taken much to scatter them.

The strong likelihood is that Deng and the Chinese leaders wanted a violent end to the affair. The massacre in Tiananmen Square was very much in the Chinese

SOURCE C



A lone man halts a line of tanks in Beijing on 5 June 1989. Details of who he was and his subsequent fate are still obscure, but it is thought that having been pulled away and smuggled back into the crowd he was later arrested by the authorities and imprisoned for a lengthy period. It is known that a number of the demonstrators rounded up after the massacre were still being held in prison as late as 2015.

tradition of crushing opposition by the severest means in order to emphasise the illegitimacy of opposition itself. It was the surest confirmation that Deng Xiaoping's reforms did not include an extension of political freedoms. The CCP was willing to consider sweeping economic change in China. What it would not contemplate was giving up its authority over the Chinese people.

The photo in Source C has become one of the most immediately recognisable images relating to the Tiananmen Square massacre. Why is this?

Deng's attitude after Tiananmen

The Tiananmen massacre confirmed that, despite the new-era reforms introduced under Deng Xiaoping, the PRC remained an authoritarian Communist regime. Nevertheless, there were strains within the government and party. Deng was aware that what he called a left and a right had developed within the CCP. By the left he meant those who were unhappy about the speed with which China was embracing economic liberalism, those who would have been quite content to see the PRC less advanced as long as it kept its Communist character. By the right he meant those in the party keen to move even faster towards economic growth, towards 'total Westernisation'. Deng saw it as his task to hold a balance between these two, for, if either influence became too strong, it could destroy what had been achieved by his reforms. In a sense, Deng had defined the basic problem that had confronted the PRC since its foundation in 1949: how to modernise the nation and at the same time be true to the principles of Chinese communism.

By the early 1990s, this had become an even more difficult conundrum. The **velvet revolutions** in Europe suggested that communism was a spent political force. But where did that leave Communist China? Should it cling to the belief that it was a leader of international revolution or should it return to China's

KEY TERM

Velvet revolutions
The non-violent popular movements in the Soviet satellites in the late 1980s that brought down the Communist governments and led eventually to the collapse of the Soviet Union by 1991.

traditional view of itself as a unique culture separate from all others? Of one thing Deng was sure: China could not detach itself from the world economically. Its survival as a nation depended on its capacity to produce and to trade.

Deng Xiaoping was a realist and a pragmatist. His own bitter experiences during the GMD–CCP Civil War, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and now Tiananmen Square, had convinced him that China's greatest need was stability. He further believed that the only way to preserve this was by retaining the Communist system in China. Communism, for Deng, mattered less as a revolutionary ideology than as a practical system for preserving China from internal chaos and possible disintegration. Communism was the new Confucianism; it was a set of common values that, when adhered to, enabled China to function as a harmonious society. It followed, as it had in Confucian times, that those who dared to disrupt that harmony were deserving of the severest punishment by the state.

Continuing repression under Deng

One of Deng's observations after Tiananmen was that China suffered from 'too much politics'. His meaning was that the PRC, having gone through the travails of its first four decades of existence, now had an established socialist system of government. The politics had been settled. Now it was time for the people to abandon thoughts of political conflict; the enlightened CCP would guide the people whose task now was to build China into a great economic power. What outsiders might call political stagnation, Deng saw as the natural political conservatism which maintained the revolution. If that sounded paradoxical, it was the type of paradox that was basic to Marxism.

It was because he was, in the Chinese context, a political conservative that Deng Xiaoping presided over an increasingly repressive regime. A notable victim was Wei Jingsheng who, in 1979, had been the first martyr in the government's crackdown on the protests that began at the democracy wall in Beijing (see page 242). Wei's original sentence of eighteen years was increased by another fourteen years in 1993 for 'subversion'. His crime this time was that in June 1989, while in prison, he had condemned the government for its massacre of the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

At the time of Wei's second sentence in 1993, *The Observer's* Hong Kong correspondent wrote: 'Wei is the nightmare scenario made flesh, the man who more than anyone else proves Beijing to be incapable of tolerating dissenting views, even if they are peacefully expressed.' Wei was eventually released in 1997. This was not an act of clemency; the Chinese authorities simply did not want the embarrassment of Wei, who appeared to be seriously ill, dying in prison. The rigidity of the government's outlook was disturbingly illustrated by the statistic that at Deng's death in 1997 there were more political prisoners held in the *laogai*, China's prison-camp system (see page 216), than there had been in 1976 at the time of Mao's passing.

Chapter summary

In the power struggle after Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping, using the highly valuable political and military contacts that he had made, first physically removed the Gang of Four and then outmanoeuvred the only other contender, Hua Guofeng. Acknowledged as paramount leader by the party, Deng began to undermine Mao's policies, not by an open attack on his reputation but by the drip effect. At the Third Plenum in 1978, Deng persuaded the party to accept the Four Modernisations, his strategy for economic reform. His plan was to follow an essentially capitalist line offering incentives and allowing profits to peasants and workers. His ending of the 'iron rice bowl' aroused resentment but the overall effect of his reforms was spectacular. Under pressure to grant a Fifth Modernisation – democracy – Deng resisted to the extent of using the PLA to crush the pro-democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989. The severity of the repression that followed was a clear indication that the Chinese Communist authorities were wholly unwilling to contemplate liberalising the PRC's political system. China's modernising neo-capitalism system would exist side by side with continued CCP authoritarianism.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. How had Deng established himself as Mao's successor by 1978?
2. In what ways was the Third Plenum a turning point in post-Maoist China?
3. How did Deng plan to undermine Mao's policies and reputation?
4. What part did the trial of the Gang of Four play in undermining Maoism?
5. What economic aims underlay the Four Modernisations programme?
6. In what sense was Deng's industrial policy a 'hands off' approach?
7. Why did so many Chinese feel let down by Deng's economic reforms?
8. What were the aims of the democracy movement?
9. Why was the Tiananmen Square protest of 1989 crushed with such severity?

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. How far do you agree with the opinion that Deng Xiaoping's Four Modernisations were intended to strengthen the international position of the PRC?
2. How far can the economic programme introduced under Deng Xiaoping in the years 1978–97 be regarded as the key turning point in China's relationship with the wider world in the years 1860–1997?

CHAPTER 10

China and the wider world 1978–97

The remarkable changes that Deng Xiaoping's reforms brought to the Chinese economy were accompanied by equally important shifts in the attitude of the People's Republic of China to the outside world. Indeed, China's economic progress and modernisation depended on its opening itself to the world. Deng had decided that China's future was as a commercial nation, selling its industrial products on the international market. To achieve this, it was essential for China to be on cooperative terms with the capitalist world and its financial and commercial systems. That was the underlying objective in China's foreign policy after 1978 and is the theme of this chapter, which covers the material under the following headings:

- ★ China as a regional power in Asia
- ★ Reconciliation with old enemies
- ★ The PRC and Hong Kong
- ★ China's membership of international organisations

Key dates

1978	Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty
1979	Deng's visit to USA
	PLA involved in Cambodia
1983	Lhasa Rising
1984	'Two systems' principle applied to Taiwan
	Joint Declaration over Hong Kong
1989	Mikhail Gorbachev visited China
1991	Collapse of USSR
1993	Tibetan Rising
1994	USA granted PRC 'Most Favored Nation' status
1997	Death of Deng Xiaoping
	Jiang Zemin's visit to USA
	China joined the IMF and the World Bank
	Return of Hong Kong to China
	Kyoto Protocol

1 China as a regional power in Asia

▶ *What policies did Deng Xiaoping follow in order to secure the PRC's position as a regional power in Asia?*

Deng's greatest achievement was to preside over the transformation of the People's Republic of China into a world economic and commercial power. But in order to achieve that status, he felt it necessary to seek to resolve a number of

issues that he had inherited. He regarded many of them as regional problems but they overlapped at many points with China's relations with major powers. It is particularly noticeable that until 1991, when the Soviet Union ceased to exist, Deng was always anxious to prevent it from gaining an international advantage at the PRC's expense. For him, Soviet expansionism was still a reality that had to be guarded against. His warming towards old enemies such as the USA and Japan was not simply a pursuit of reconciliation; it was a way of outmanoeuvring the Soviet Union (see page 135).

China and Vietnam

In 1975, a Marxist revolution had also taken place in Cambodia. **Pol Pot** had seized power after a successful guerrilla war modelled on Maoist strategy. The savagery of Pol Pot's regime in crushing opposition outstripped even the excesses of China's Cultural Revolution. However, Pol Pot's Maoist credentials made him a hero to the Chinese. When the Soviet-backed Vietnamese launched a major offensive into Cambodia in 1979 to overthrow Pol Pot, Deng's China came to his aid by invading Vietnam, with the principal aim of preventing the Soviet Union from establishing its authority there.

KEY FIGURE

Pol Pot (1925–98)
The leader of the Cambodian Communists (the Khmer Rouge); notorious for the brutality of his dictatorial rule in Cambodia (1975–9), which killed around a quarter of the 8 million population.

The official PRC version of what followed led the Chinese people to believe that the PLA had gained a resounding military success, thereby illustrating the success of Deng's Fourth Modernisation – China's military reorganisation (see page 237). The truth was otherwise. The PLA had suffered heavy casualties and had been forced to withdraw from Vietnam, having failed to prevent Pol Pot's defeat by the Vietnamese. Although it was withheld from public knowledge in China, the PRC had undergone a serious reverse. Nevertheless, it was a clear sign of the PRC's determination to establish its influence over its southern neighbours in Asia. The problem of Soviet influence resolved itself a decade later when the USSR collapsed (see page 249).

China and Tibet

The PRC's relations with Tibet, which it regarded not as a separate nation but as one of its outlying provinces, had been strained since the PLA had first imposed itself on the region in 1950 (see pages 131 and 176). Under Deng Xiaoping there was an apparent easing; his government tried to emphasise to the Tibetans the great advantages of cooperation with Beijing. The benefits that 'reunification' could bring were dangled before them: education, health care, modern transport, and an end to Tibet's backward and inefficient ways.

KEY TERM

Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) Dating from 1965, when Mao's government tried to give a semblance of legality to its control of Tibet by declaring it to be a self-governing region.

The majority of the Tibetan people remained unimpressed. They knew that beneath the allure of such things was the same Chinese determination to destroy Tibet's separate identity. In 1985, the Tibetans' refusal to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the **Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR)** became the prelude to further open resistance that went on into the late 1980s. There were violent clashes when China sent in further detachments of the PLA to crush

what threatened to become a Tibetan national revolt. From exile, the Dalai Lama denounced China's actions in Tibet as 'cultural genocide'. To the embarrassment and anger of Beijing, his passionate defence of his benighted country led to his being awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 1989. This was more than a personal tribute; it was an implicit international recognition of the justice of Tibet's cause. It was also a rebuff to Deng Xiaoping's hopes of gaining international acceptance of the PRC's Tibetan policies by persuading the Dalai Lama to end his self-imposed exile and return to his homeland.

KEY TERMS

Nobel Peace Prize Awarded annually by the Norwegian Nobel Committee to a selected person who 'shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations'.

Panchen Lama Designated successor to the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Lama faith.

Asia Watch An international body concerned with monitoring human rights abuses.

The Lhasa Rising 1993

That the PRC's methods had not totally crushed Tibetan resistance became evident in 1993 when the largest protest in China since the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstration occurred in Lhasa, Tibet's capital. The same predictable Chinese response followed; the PLA were sent in and thousands of arrests were made. Those imprisoned were brutally treated. The **Panchen Lama** was seized by the Chinese and taken into 'protective custody', a euphemism for strict house arrest. Through its contacts in Tibet, **Asia Watch** was able to give the Western media detailed accounts of the brutal actions of the Chinese in Lhasa.

Tibetan refugees visited the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York to present the horror story. Great concern was shown by the international community about China's affront to human rights but no concerted action was taken. From 1950, when it had first been invaded, it had been clear that Tibet lacked the strategic and economic importance to make it an area for intervention by the great powers. Deng could be confident that the Tibetan issue would not seriously compromise China's international standing.

The Taiwan issue

When Deng Xiaoping began addressing the Taiwan question, he was encouraged by the increasing economic contact between the island and mainland China. Although this was unofficial, it was of major importance since it suggested that China and Taiwan were not irretrievably separated. Deng appeared willing to reverse the idea that the PRC would never tolerate the existence of two Chinas. In 1984, he declared: 'The main system in China must be socialism. The one billion people on the mainland will continue to live under the socialist system, but a capitalist system will be allowed to exist in certain areas, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan.'

Autonomy and sovereignty

The tone of Deng's remarks was very much in accord with the 'nine principles' presented by the PRC in 1981 which set out a programme for 'the return of Taiwan to the motherland for the peaceful reunification of China'. A key principle had read: 'After the country is unified, Taiwan can enjoy a high degree of autonomy as a special administrative region.' At first sight this clause seemed

to suggest that the PRC was willing to concede on the crucial point of Taiwan's autonomy. But this was a misreading. Communist China may have softened its tone but on one essential it had not changed. Behind the more accommodating words there was the same resolution not to budge on the matter of the PRC's absolute right to govern the whole of China. Deng made this clear in a speech in 1983 in which he declared that 'different systems may be practised, but it must be the People's Republic of China that alone represents true China'.

Although better relations developed between Taiwan and the mainland in the 1980s, the basic position remained unchanged; the PRC and Taiwan, each in its separate way, remained wholly committed to the notion that it was the legitimate China. Deng Xiaoping's formula, 'one nation, two systems', had been invoked to ease the transition from British colonial rule in Hong Kong to rule from Beijing (see page 260). Deng believed that it could be applied equally to Taiwan. But that avoided the question of sovereignty. China had been able to re-establish its right to Hong Kong because in the end the existing ruling power, Britain, accepted the legality of the PRC's claim to sovereignty. As things stood in Deng's time, the possibility that the government of Nationalist China would do the same appeared extremely remote. That was why the PRC government resolutely resisted Taiwan's appeals in the 1990s for diplomatic recognition and re-entry into the UN. It was an unresolved issue that would long outlive Deng Xiaoping.

China and the Pacific Rim

It so happened that China made a number of vital strategic gains under Deng that neither he nor the PRC had worked for or initiated. The Russian Federation that replaced the USSR in 1991 decided that it would have to cut back on many of the former Soviet commitments. One area it withdrew from was the **Pacific Rim**; it gave up its naval base at Vladivostok. By chance, this coincided with the decision by the USA not to retain its naval base in the Philippines. Since Japan's post-war fleet was negligible by international standards, this, by default, left China dominant over a large area of the western Pacific.

Freed by all this from any likely international intervention, the PRC chose to take possession of the **Spratly Islands**. Ignoring all counter-claims, China took the islands by force, sinking two Vietnamese vessels and frightening the other claimants off by sending nuclear-armed submarines to the area. Victory over the Vietnamese was particularly satisfying for China since it was the settling of an old score (see page 253).

KEY TERMS

Pacific Rim The lands around the rim of the Pacific Ocean, including such countries as Japan, Russia, Taiwan, North and South Korea, the Philippines, the USA and Australia.

Spratly Islands An island group in the South China Sea which was believed to have large oil deposits; the islands had been claimed variously by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Regional minorities

As the PRC under Deng sought to open itself to the world it became concerned that some of its minority peoples might create a problem for China internationally. A basic fear of the PRC government was that religion might encourage the breakaway tendencies in the western provinces. From the

beginning of its rule in 1949, Mao's government had confirmed that it would not grant independence to any of the provinces or regions. That is why in 1950 it had sent the PLA into Tibet, Xinjiang and Guangzhou to enforce its authority (see page 130). It claimed that the strength, indeed the survival, of the PRC as a nation demanded total unity and obedience to central control.

This had special reference to the PRC's outlying western provinces, Tibet and Xinjiang, areas larger in size than Western Europe. It was Tibet's Lama faith, a particular form of Buddhism, that inspired Tibetan nationalism in its resistance to Chinese occupation. The PRC fretted that religion and nationalism would prove an equally dangerous mix in Tibet's northern neighbour, Xinjiang. Here, the majority of the population was made up of the **Uighur, Kazakh, Hui and Kirghiz** peoples who were predominantly Muslim in faith.

What added to Chinese fears was the strategic position of Xinjiang, on whose western borders lay Pakistan, Turkistan and Kazakhstan, all of them strongly Muslim countries. Beijing's concern was that, given the growing confidence of Islam as a force in international affairs in the last quarter of the twentieth century, religious belief would combine with politics to create a dangerous separatist movement in Xinjiang, backed by these border countries. In a major effort to prevent this, the PRC condemned all independence organisations in China's border regions as 'handfuls of national separatists' with 'reactionary feudal ideas' who were in league with 'hostile foreign forces'. In 1996, in a diplomatic effort to lessen the separatist threat, the PRC invited a number of neighbouring states, subsequently known as the **Shanghai Five**, to meet in Shanghai. The outcome was an agreement to work together 'to combat ethnic and religious tensions' in their respective countries. Little of practical importance followed, but China's initiative had shown its fears of the growing ethnic and religious movements within the PRC.

Inside its own borders, the PRC adopted the same policy that it had followed in Tibet (see page 176): it tried to dilute the Muslim element in the population by settling large numbers of Han Chinese in the region. This proved only partially successful. By 2000, the Muslim proportion still formed a large and growing minority of the Xinjiang population.

The PRC in Africa

Hong Kong, Tibet and Taiwan could be regarded as falling within the PRC's own region. But, under Deng, the PRC also began to extend its influence into the wider world. It began to make inroads into Africa in a move that Deng's successors were greatly to expand. Confident that there was unlikely to be any major resistance from the Western powers, which were inhibited by their **post-imperial guilt**, China made a series of commercial and financial deals with the leaders of a large number of African states. Disregarding the human rights record of the regimes they dealt with, the PRC was concerned only with establishing an economic hold. As Professor **Peter Takirambudde** put it (1995):

KEY TERMS

Uighur, Kazakh, Hui and Kirghiz Ethnic groups, who, in regard to race, language and religion, were distinct from the Han people who made up over 90 per cent of China's population.

Shanghai Five A formal meeting in 1996 between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Post-imperial guilt The notion that the exploitative record of the ex-colonial powers denied them the moral right to interfere in the regions they had once held.

KEY FIGURE

Peter Takirambudde (1953–)

The Ugandan lawyer who became director of the Human Rights Watch organisation in 1995.

'Wherever there are resources the Chinese are going to go there. They see no evil. They hear no evil.'

By the time of Deng's death in 1997, the PRC was in the early stage of what would become a huge expansion into Africa. An area of central Africa stretching from the Sudan to Namibia had been targeted. China's chief economic aim was to obtain cheap raw materials. Chinese companies negotiated lucrative contracts allowing them to extract oil, metal ores, diamonds and timber. China also provided aid and cheap loans as a way of establishing a strong commercial foothold.

One of China's advantages in seeking influence in Africa was that it presented itself as having a special historical link with Africa, claiming that from Mao onwards revolutionary China had been a beacon for the emergent nations struggling to throw off their colonial masters. It was certainly the case that the PRC sent economic and military assistance to a number of African countries. Deng's China now began to reap the benefits of this policy. By 2000, China had established a foothold in large areas of central and western Africa.

2 Reconciliation with old enemies

▶ *In what ways did Deng's China develop improved relations with former adversaries?*

As leader of China, Deng Xiaoping made the momentous decision that in order to be economically successful in a capitalist-dominated world, the PRC needed to be on cooperative terms with the capitalist nations. This did not mean that it had to forgive and forget past humiliations or ignore ideological differences, but it did mean that a realistic approach had to be adopted. Pragmatism demanded that reconciliation rather than conflict was the better path. Former adversaries had to be treated with sufficient respect for them to become willing trading partners with China. It also meant that China would have to recognise and eventually join the economic and financial institutions within which capitalism operated.

China and the USA

In advancing his programme for China's opening itself to the world, Deng Xiaoping was undoubtedly assisted by the more pliant attitude of the USA. Sino-American **rapprochement** had begun with the USA's switching its recognition from Nationalist Taiwan to the PRC (see page 134), and continued through the 1970s, reaching its highest point so far in 1979 with the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries. In that year, Deng Xiaoping accepted a presidential invitation to visit the USA, where he made a favourable impression on the politicians and enthusiastic crowds who greeted him. Such events did not immediately wipe out the mutual suspicion

KEY TERM

Rapprochement A return to friendlier relations.

created by years of East–West hostility, but the machinery for diplomatic contact and trade was now in place. Sino-American differences over human rights would not be allowed to stand in the way. That the legitimacy of China's place in the international order had been accepted was evident from a speech made later by US President Clinton.

SOURCE A

From 'Remarks by President Clinton during the Announcement of the Renewal of MFN [Most Favored Nation] Status for China', 26 May 1994, quoted in Pei-kai Cheng and Michal Lestz, editors, *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, W.W. Norton, 1999, pp. 514–15.

Our relationship with China is important to all Americans. We have significant interests in what happens there and what happens between us. China has an atomic arsenal and a vote and a veto in the UN Security Council. It is a major factor in Asian and global security. We share important interests, such as in a nuclear-free Korean peninsula and in sustaining the global environment. China is also the world's fastest growing economy. Over $8 billion of United States exports to China last year supported 150,000 American jobs.

I have decided that the United States should renew 'Most Favored Nation' trading status toward China. The decision, I believe, offers us the best opportunity to lay the basis for long-term sustainable progress in human rights, and for the advancement of our other interests with China. I am moving, therefore, to delink human rights from the annual extension of Most Favored Nation status for China. That linkage has been constructive during the past years, but I believe we have reached the end of the usefulness of that policy.

? In Source A, in what way does President Clinton pay tribute to China's position as a global power? Why was he willing to grant MFN status to China?

What Clinton was, in effect, saying was that, in a tough competitive global market, human rights considerations, while important, could not be allowed to interfere with trade. It became the standard approach adopted by all the Western nations in their dealings with China: commercial necessities came first. This might be described as a two-way shift. Both China and the West were prepared in practical terms to move away from their rigid ideological positions. China under Deng had been willing to adopt neo-capitalism at home and eagerly engage in trade with the world's capitalist nations. The West, for its part, was prepared to ignore the illiberalism of China's Communist regime and enter fully into trading relations with it. Both West and East adapted to the world as it was rather than as they might like it to have been.

China's response to the collapse of the Soviet Union

A considerable encouragement to closer Sino-American ties was a remarkable twist in international history, which occurred in Deng's time and which few had foreseen. The disintegration of the USSR in 1991 meant that China was left as the world's only major Communist power. The question everyone now asked was whether the PRC would pursue international revolution, which, according to its Marxist principles, it was pledged to do. But Deng Xiaoping's pragmatism

was again evident. He looked at the failure of the 75-year Soviet experiment and noted why it had collapsed. He judged that the Soviet system:

- had failed to develop a consumer economy that could reward its people for their efforts
- had been incapable of reforming its agriculture sufficiently to feed its population
- had pursued an arms race with the USA that it could not afford.

Moreover, these failures had been presided over by a Soviet Communist Party that had lost belief in itself. Deng was resolved not to make the same errors. He approached foreign questions primarily as a defender of his country's interests, not as an international revolutionary. His chief aim, set in motion by his domestic reforms, was to ensure the political survival of the Chinese Communist Party by consolidating China's position as a major nation that had embraced modernity. That is what determined his attitude towards foreign affairs.

China and Japan

The PRC's greater commercial openness helped to prepare the way for better relations with its traditional enemy, Japan. Despite the record of the savage Japanese occupation of China in the 1930s and 1940s, which was locked into China's collective memory (see page 110), national interests required that this should not stand in the way of lucrative Sino-Japanese commercial contracts being agreed. Preliminary discussions between Beijing and Tokyo had been held in 1975 and these formed the basis of what became the Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty signed in 1978 (Source B), an agreement that laid the basis for the growing trade contacts that followed throughout Deng's period of leadership. After the signing, Deng visited Japan in 1978 and top-level ministerial visits and diplomatic exchanges followed.

SOURCE B

From the Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty, 12 August 1978 (available at: http://ee.china-embassy.org/eng/zggk/xzgwjjs/t110287.htm).

The Contracting Parties shall develop durable relations of peace and friendship on the basis of the Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence:

All disputes shall be settled by peaceful means without resorting to the use or threat of force;

The Contracting Parties shall endeavour to further develop their economic and cultural cooperation and to promote exchanges between the people of the two countries.

The two parties declare that neither of them should seek ***hegemony*** *in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other regions and that each was opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony.*

The present Treaty shall not affect the position of either Contracting Party regarding its relations with other countries.

According to Source B, what are the 'Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence'?

KEY TERM

Hegemony Control and authority exercised by one country over others.

Arguably, the most significant clause was that relating to the two countries' agreement to oppose 'hegemony', their term for Soviet expansionism. In the event, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 meant that that aspect of the agreement became a dead letter, but it had indicated a mutual awareness of each other's strategic concerns and that until its collapse, the USSR was regarded by Deng as the greatest threat to China in the Pacific region.

Notwithstanding the improved formal relations, there were frequent occasions when the bitterness of Sino-Japanese history reasserted itself. There was still a residual fear among the Chinese of a resurgence of Japanese militarism. A particular issue was the reluctance of Japan to acknowledge its war crimes against China. The Chinese were angered by Japan's practice of omitting any reference in its history books to its brutal behaviour during the 1931–45 occupation. An episode that proved especially contentious was the decision of Japan's Prime Minister Nakasone to visit the **Yasukini Shrine** in 1985. Since the shrine contained the names of a number of Japan's wartime leaders who had committed war crimes, the visit was resented by the Chinese as being, at best, tasteless, at worst deeply insulting. Such incidents meant that Sino-Japanese relations often became strained, but this did not seriously interfere with their increasing trade contacts. The PRC's readiness not to allow moral outrage to get in the way of commercial growth was a reflection of Deng's determination to approach trade questions from a purely economic standpoint.

KEY TERM

Yasukini Shrine
A traditional site in Tokyo dedicated to the remembrance of Japanese heroes.

3 The PRC and Hong Kong

By what stages did the PRC recover Hong Kong?

Hong Kong's importance to China

The British colony of Hong Kong, formed in 1898 (see page 35), developed during the following century into one of the most prosperous cities in the world. After the Communist takeover of mainland China in 1949, it became a haven for those fleeing from Mao Zedong's authoritarian PRC. Thousands of businessmen and bankers, who brought their wealth with them, settled in Hong Kong and quickly turned it into a world centre of manufacturing, commerce and finance. By the 1970s, a cleverly marketed tourist industry began to add to the island's prosperity. Hong Kong was a boomtown. Its impressive feats produced a mixture of resentment and admiration in China's Communist rulers. Nowhere in the PRC was there anything to match Hong Kong's economic miracle. Yet, the PRC could take deep satisfaction from the thought that under the terms of the 1898 agreement, Hong Kong, 'the pearl of the orient', would return to China in 1997. Deng Xiaoping anticipated that it would add a huge asset to his modernisation plans for China.

Negotiations with Britain

There were difficult questions, however. Would Britain be willing to honour the letter of a century-old treaty and hand over the colony and its people to a Communist regime that had been capable of such policies as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution? Moreover, opinion polls showed that 95 per cent of the Hong Kong people wanted to stay British. Would Britain use this as a justification for resisting China's claim? In strictly legal terms, Britain had a case for doing so. According to the earlier treaties, Kowloon and the island of Hong Kong were permanent British possessions. It was only the New Territories that were leased. The PRC expected to meet difficulties and prepared for a long diplomatic battle. PRC–UK talks began in China in 1979. **Margaret Thatcher** was personally involved in the negotiations from 1982 onwards. Deng Xiaoping took a hard line. He told Mrs Thatcher that the PRC regarded Hong Kong as a part of sovereign Chinese territory and there was no question of Britain's lease being extended. He told her, 'I would rather see Hong Kong torched than leave Britain to rule it after 1997.'

KEY FIGURE

Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013)

British prime minister between 1979 and 1990, the first to go to China while in office.

Mrs Thatcher knew that Britain was not in a strong bargaining position. The idea of giving up the New Territories but keeping Hong Kong and Kowloon, to which it was technically entitled, was not really an option. It was the New Territories that supplied Hong Kong with its essential water and power supplies. The logistical problems of supplying the island by any other means were insurmountable. Deng was not exaggerating when, in one sharp exchange, he threatened that Chinese forces 'could walk in and take Hong Kong later today if they wanted to'.

Deng knew that he also held the moral high ground. His argument was that, whatever the legal niceties involved, Britain's claim to Hong Kong was founded on dated imperialist concepts. The British had originally acquired the colony through superior military strength, forcing China to sign away Hong Kong against its will. It was, said Deng, an example of colonialism at its most exploitative. The *People's Daily* commented bitterly: '150 years ago, to maintain its drug trafficking in China, Britain launched the aggressive Opium War against China, during which it carried out burning, killing, rape, and plunder on Chinese soil.'

The Joint Declaration 1984

Aware of its military and moral weakness, all Britain could work for was a compromise that would give Hong Kong some form of legally binding protection after it returned to China. This came in the form of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, signed in December 1984:

- Britain agreed that on the expiry of the lease on the New Territories in 1997 all the areas that made up Hong Kong would return to the PRC.

- In return, the PRC declared that Hong Kong after 1997 would be treated as a **Special Administrative Region (SAR)** until 2047. This would leave its capitalist economic structure unaltered.

It was Deng himself who had introduced the SAR solution. When asked why he had been willing to offer 50 years of continued capitalism in Hong Kong, he replied that he expected that by 2047 the PRC would have advanced to the stage where its economic prosperity would outmatch that of the capitalist nations. He described the coexistence of the Communist mainland with the capitalist island as 'one country, two systems'. It was a principle that was also applied to Taiwan (see page 254). He explained: 'When we speak of two systems, it is because the main part of China is practising socialism. It is under this prerequisite that we allow capitalism to remain in a small part of the country. This will help develop our socialist economy, and so will the policy of opening to the world.'

KEY TERM

Special Administrative Region (SAR) An area granted the right to remain substantially the same in its social and economic system, given that it recognised the ultimate sovereignty of the PRC government over it.

Hong Kong's democrats

The Joint Declaration still left unresolved issues. During the period leading to the 1997 handover, tensions remained taut. A particularly demanding problem was the opposition of Hong Kong's democrats, who felt that the Declaration would not give them sufficient protection post-1997. Events were soon to justify their concerns. In June 1989 came news of the Tiananmen Square massacre. If the Communist government was capable of violently suppressing its own democracy movement, asked Hong Kong democrats, what compunction would it have about ignoring the terms of the Joint Declaration?

The Tiananmen Square tragedy in 1989 threatened to cast a shadow over relations between Britain and Communist China during the eight years leading to the 1997 handover. Problems persisted. One principal cause of dispute was Britain's attempt, directed after 1992 by **Chris Patten**, the last governor of Hong Kong, to introduce as much democracy as possible into Hong Kong before Britain left. One tactic that particularly incensed Beijing was Patten's proposal to turn Hong Kong's Legislative Council (LEGCO) from an appointed body into an elected one. The PRC government made it clear that as soon as it took over in 1997 it would reverse this move and replace LEGCO with its own Nominated Legislative Council. The PRC's anger over this issue was not entirely unreasonable. The truth was that Britain, during its previous 150-year control of the colony, had made no attempt to introduce democracy into its governing of Hong Kong. All holders of official positions had been appointed by the British, not elected by the Hong Kong people.

KEY FIGURE

Chris Patten (1944–)

A former Conservative minister, he became disliked by the PRC officials, who claimed he acted outside the spirit if not the terms of the Joint Agreement.

While Hong Kong's democrats applauded Patten's efforts, the British government were lukewarm in their support of him. While careful never to contradict him openly, the Foreign Office let the Chinese know that Britain did not really intend to put problems in their way. Indeed, much to the anger of the colony's democrats, Britain seemed intent on causing as little fuss as possible by not pressing Beijing on the democracy question. Critics of British policy towards China in the period before the Hong Kong handover suggested that Britain, having negotiated the 1984 Joint Declaration, simply could not wait to be rid of the colony. Since the thing was now inevitable, why continue to make trouble over it? Far more important was the maintenance of good relations with China whose billion-plus population offered huge commercial prospects for Britain.

There were also notable figures in Britain who believed that China needed to be shown more understanding. Edward Heath (see page 151), a former British prime minister and a frequent visitor to China, where he met both Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, urged people in the West not to be censorious or superior when considering Chinese attitudes. He argued that the very different histories of China and the West made it inappropriate to judge the two cultures by the same standards. It was unreasonable, therefore, to expect Beijing to apply Western forms of democracy in Hong Kong or any other of its territories. It should be added that the democratic parties in Hong Kong found Heath's analysis highly objectionable. They dismissed it as typifying the reasoning that allowed Britain's officials and ministers to keep their consciences clear while selling out the Hong Kong people to a repressive regime.

The importance of the peaceful return of Hong Kong 1997

Whatever the concerns of the British may have been, it was clear that their concessions to the PRC gave Deng all that he had wanted. The peaceful handover in 1997 may be regarded as Deng's last and greatest achievement:

- Without a shot being fired and avoiding a UK–PRC confrontation, he had asserted the PRC's sovereignty and regained Asia's most prosperous city.
- The Hong Kong democrats would continue to feel embittered towards Britain and distrustful of their Beijing masters, doubting that they would honour their promise to leave the ex-colony untouched for 50 years. Nevertheless, there was never any possibility that Britain would support the democrats.
- The PRC's possession of Hong Kong was now an unchallengeable fact of international relations. Deng had gained British and international recognition of China's rights.

4 China's membership of international organisations

▶ *Why did the PRC decide to join a number of international institutions?*

The United Nations

Deng was aware that some of his colleagues were highly doubtful of the benefits of the PRC's belonging to international bodies, since they were Western dominated. He shared some of the doubts but his conviction was that membership of the UN and of the UN Security Council (see page 133) gave mainland China a prestige and status that far outweighed any dangers of its being subjected to Western whims. In any case, that risk became increasingly remote the stronger financially and economically the PRC became. It is significant that the PRC frequently used its veto in the UN Security Council to block various American and Western initiatives regarding peace plans in the world's trouble spots. This had little to do with the merits of the specific issue or the particular proposals and more to do with China's wish to assert itself on the world stage and increase its influence in key areas.

One example was the PRC's support of North Korea, which the Western powers viewed as a dangerous **rogue regime**. Worried by the development of nuclear weapons in North Korea, the USA appealed to the PRC to help form an international group to condemn the regime. Deng's government, which had helped to develop North Korea's nuclear programme, declined the appeal. While it was true that the PRC was itself worried by the volatility of the North Korean leaders and regarded them as an embarrassment, it was unwilling to criticise them openly, preferring to keep its censures a private matter between the two governments. In that way, the PRC aimed to remain independent of the West and free to act as it saw fit in its own interests. The sceptical American view was that China declined to voice criticism of North Korea in order not to draw attention to the PRC's own arms build-up along its part of the Pacific Rim, with its implied threat to Taiwan.

The IMF and the World Bank

By 1997, the PRC had become a member of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **World Bank**. It had accumulated over $130 billion in foreign currency reserves and was the largest recipient of World Bank loans. Nevertheless, Deng had to face resistance within the CCP over this, since some of the more hardline Communists regarded these moves as subordinating China to the USA's global economic policies. Deng managed to stifle the criticism but it was still being heard around the time of his death. One Beijing academic wrote in 1998, 'Globalization is really Americanization. The IMF, World Bank, and the

KEY TERMS

Rogue regime A government not conforming to accepted international diplomatic standards and, therefore, difficult to influence or control.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Created in 1947 with the main intention of preventing countries from going bankrupt. Member states make deposits into a central fund from which they are entitled to draw in times of difficulty.

World Bank A UN financial body, similar in operation to the IMF, that provides loans to developing countries to enable them to embark on growth programmes.

UN are controlled by the US government.' Despite such comments, Deng's will prevailed posthumously and the PRC pressed its claim for membership of the **World Trade Organisation (WTO)**.

The stumbling block was the USA, which took a strangely ambiguous approach towards the PRC. For some fifteen years after 1985, the USA had vetoed the PRC's application to join **GATT**, the original title of the WTO, but, eventually, in line with its earlier granting of Most Favored Nation status, it withdrew its opposition and China duly became a WTO member in 2001. Although this happened four years after Deng's death, it may be regarded as essentially his achievement since it was the outcome of his determination to make the PRC a modern commercial power.

The Kyoto Protocol 1997

There was a particular international initiative which China chose to disregard. During Deng's time, China built 30,000 coal mines and constructed 30 nuclear power stations. Significantly, it was unwilling to consider the polluting effect of such growth. In 1997, the PRC declined to sign the **Kyoto Protocol**, a decision that seriously weakened the effectiveness of the agreement since China's carbon dioxide emissions were greater than those of the USA and Europe combined. The reason why China did not sign was simple: it did not think it served its interests to do so. However, this was not mere economic obstinacy. The wellsprings of its attitude lay deep in its history. Since the Opium Wars (see page 8), which provided the lens through which China viewed its relations with the world outside, China had never fully trusted the West. Its response to Kyoto, therefore, was that, if it were to limit its gas emissions to the levels proposed, it would retard its industrial growth. The result would be that China would remain poor while the developed countries would continue to prosper and live comfortably.

The Chinese also let it be known that they would not take lectures from the West on preserving the environment. Their view was that it was hypocritical of the Western nations, who had made themselves wealthy by exploiting the world's resources without considering environmental consequences, now to seek to pressure China into adopting policies that would slow its growth. To add weight to this assertion, the Chinese pointed out that the resources and fuel used by the delegates flying to Kyoto, and in the social entertainment that accompanied the conference there, would have maintained a Chinese town for over a year.

The harsh economic reality was that so industrially polluted had China become by the late 1990s that had it adopted the Kyoto proposals, it would have had to spend on its clean-up programme the equivalent every year of what it derived from its annual growth rate of around eight per cent. The equation was in exact balance. In Chinese judgement, in order to go green China would have to sacrifice being a modern industrial power.

KEY TERMS

World Trade Organisation (WTO) Originally formed in 1948 as GATT, a body to oversee and regulate international trade agreements, it became the WTO in 1995, its 160 member states representing over 96 per cent of global trade.

GATT General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Kyoto Protocol A formal commitment by industrial nations in 1997 to limit the emission of their greenhouse gases. Neither China nor the USA signed the Protocol.

Reason for China's suspicion of the West

While China under Deng was eager to play its role as a world power, it declined to see things other than on its own terms. China's particular understanding of its past explains its unwillingness to go with the tide on international issues. Having, as it saw it, thrown off 150 years of subjection to the West, it was not going to compromise its independence by falling in with Western notions. A short time before his death, Deng and China were criticised for their reluctance to commit themselves to international schemes such as the promotion of human rights and the prevention of environmental damage. The PRC's rejoinder was to point out that when the Western imperialist powers were expanding uninvited into foreign countries, including China, they had paid scant attention to human rights then. Deng stressed that the Western powers had been quite prepared in their heyday to pollute the earth and enslave its peoples. Having made themselves rich by doing so, they then developed a conscience and wished to prevent anyone else from growing rich in a similar way. This attitude, drawn from its deep sense of historical grievance, meant that Deng's China viewed issues in a fundamentally different way from its international critics.

Deng's impact on China's international standing

Deng Xiaoping's impact on China's standing as an international power was no less significant than his impact on its domestic situation. In the post-Mao years, under Deng's modernisation programme, China chose not merely to look out on the world but, in Deng's words, 'to open itself to it'. He believed that China's future as a nation depended on expanding its commercial contacts throughout the world. The gains to China's reputation which this brought appeared to have been blighted, if not undone, in 1989 when the Tiananmen massacre reminded the West that China, for all its economic advances, was still run by a hardline Communist regime (see page 245).

Yet, surprisingly, in view of the universal international condemnation of the Chinese government for its repressive ways, the event did not cause long-term damage to the PRC's expanding commercial contacts with the USA. The truth was that the USA and the West generally were willing to swallow their misgivings about China's internal politics and to continue trading. The US State Department summed up this approach as 'engagement without endorsement'; it enabled the West to keep its commercial links with China while remaining critical of the violation of human rights by the Chinese government.

Deng Xiaoping's legacy

Deng Xiaoping died in 1997 at the age of 92, leaving China as a highly influential, even dominant, world power. He had taught that China could both modernise its economy and open itself to the outside world while at the same time retaining the absolute authority of the CCP in politics. On Deng's death,

the Western press referred appropriately to the passing away of the last emperor of China, one who had succeeded the penultimate emperor, Mao Zedong. But Deng's influence outlived him in ways that Mao's had not. The PRC's astonishing industrial and commercial growth by the beginning of the twenty-first century would not have occurred had not Deng laid the basis for it by revolutionising the Chinese economy through his Four Modernisations. Because of Deng Xiaoping, China accepted that its future was not as an inward-looking Asian nation but as an expansive global power. The paradox was that this would be achieved without the extension of political freedom to the Chinese people.

None of the leaders who have followed Deng have diverged from the policies he bequeathed to China. These may be summarised as follows:

- rejection of Mao Zedong's collectivist principles at home and isolationism abroad
- economic growth based on neo-capitalist methods of incentives and profit-making
- opening up of China to the world as a global commercial power
- China's acknowledged international standing as a superpower
- rejection of Western-style democracy for China.

Jiang Zemin

Deng's effective successor was **Jiang Zemin**. In 1993, Jiang had become president of the PRC, a position he held for the next ten years. His importance was that in all essentials he continued and expanded the work of Deng Xiaoping. Acting as a hardliner in politics and a liberal in economics, he accepted and built on the neo-capitalist policies that Deng had introduced. A pronounced feature of this was his determination to make the PRC internationally acceptable, so that China's trade and commerce could continue to flourish. To that end, in 1997, he made a tour abroad which included visits to Britain and the USA. As Deng had done on a similar visit twenty years earlier (see page 257), Jiang made a good impression. Although he had to fend off potentially embarrassing questions from the American press about Tiananmen Square and human rights, it was clear that his official hosts, the Clinton administration, were as eager as Jiang not to allow political differences to stand in the way of commercial relations.

KEY FIGURE

Jiang Zemin (1926–)

A politician of great experience, he had been general secretary of the Communist Party since 1989, working behind the scenes and establishing himself as the heir apparent to Deng Xiaoping.

China's growth under Jiang Zemin

How successful Jiang was in continuing the economic growth that had begun under Deng is evident from the following statistics. Between 1997 and 2010, the PRC's:

- exports grew in value from $572 billion to $780 billion
- imports dropped in value from $770 billion to $650 billion
- total trade rose in value from $1065 billion to $1500 billion
- trade surplus tripled in value from $33 billion to $107 billion
- economic growth averaged nine per cent every year.

Chapter summary

Believing that the integrity of the PRC as a sovereign state depended on full control of its own territories, Deng was concerned to secure China's border regions, which in turn served as a basis for China's extending its influence into neighbouring areas and becoming a strong regional power in Asia. It was also in Deng's time that the PRC pushed even further afield into Africa. As a realist, Deng appreciated that if he was to achieve his basic objective of turning China into a modern industrial and trading nation, it was essential that it be on cooperative terms with the world's commercial powers. That was why he took steps to reconcile the PRC with its former foes, principally Japan, the USA and Britain. The PRC's negotiations with Britain led to one of his greatest successes, the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997. How far Deng had elevated the status and reputation of the PRC since 1978 was illustrated by its membership of such international bodies as the IMF and the WTO. Already a member of the UN Security Council since 1971, China was poised by the time of Deng's death in 1997 to become a leading global power.

Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

1. How did the PRC consolidate its hold on its border regions?
2. How did the PRC seek to establish itself as a regional power in Asia?
3. Why was Tibet an intractable problem for the PRC?
4. Why did the PRC sign the 1978 Treaty of Friendship with Japan?
5. Why was Deng's China regarded as a Most Favored Nation by the USA?
6. How did the PRC adapt to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991?
7. What were the key features of the Joint Declaration?
8. What steps did Deng take to resolve the issues of a) Hong Kong and b) Taiwan?
9. Why, by 1997, was Deng willing to join the IMF and the World Bank?
10. In what ways did Deng's China expand its influence in Africa?
11. How high was the PRC's standing in international affairs at the time of Deng Xiaoping's death in 1997?
12. What were the main features of Deng Xiaoping's legacy in foreign affairs?
13. In what ways did Jiang Zemin build on the work of Deng Xiaoping?

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1 To what extent did the PRC consolidate its position as a regional power in South Asia in the years 1976–97?

2 'The most significant change in China's attitude to the wider world was its recognition that it needed to be on cooperative terms with the capitalist nations.' How far do you agree with this statement about the PRC's foreign policy in the years 1978–98?

3 How accurate is it to say that the PRC's membership of international organisations in the years 1978–97 demonstrated its intention to become a modern, commercial power?

4 How far do you agree that Deng Xiaoping's greatest success in foreign affairs in the years 1976–97 was the peaceful return of Hong Kong to China in 1997?

SOURCE ANALYSIS QUESTION

1 Assess the value of Source 1 for revealing Deng Xiaoping's attitude towards Hong Kong and for explaining the importance of its peaceful return to China in 1997. Explain your answer, using the source, the information given about its origin and your own knowledge about the historical context.

SOURCE 1

From a policy statement 'One country, two systems', 22–23 June 1984, issued by Deng Xiaoping, in June 1984, prior to the signing six months later of the Joint Declaration between the PRC and Britain concerning the future of Hong Kong. Quoted in Alan Lawrence, editor, *China Since 1919*, Routledge, 2004.

The Chinese government is firm in its position, principles, and policies on Hong Kong. We have stated on many occasions that, after China resumes the exercise of its sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, Hong Kong's current social and economic systems will remain unchanged, its legal system will remain basically unchanged, its way of life and its status as a free port and an international trade and financial centre will remain unchanged, and it can continue to maintain or establish economic relations with other countries and regions. We shall station troops there to safeguard our national security, not to interfere in Hong Kong's internal affairs. Our policies with regard to Hong Kong will remain unchanged for 50 years, and we mean this.

We are pursuing a policy of 'one country, two systems'. More specifically, this means that, within the People's Republic of China, the mainland with its one billion people will maintain the socialist system, while Hong Kong and Taiwan continue under the capitalist system. In recent years, China has worked hard to overcome 'Left' mistakes and has formulated its policies concerning all fields of endeavour in line with the principle of proceeding from reality and seeking truth from facts. After five and half years, things are beginning to pick up. It is against this background that we have proposed to solve the Hong Kong and Taiwan problems by allowing two systems to coexist in one country.

Our policy towards Hong Kong will remain the same for a long time to come, but this will not affect socialism on the mainland. The main part of China must continue under socialism, but a capitalist system will be allowed to exist in certain areas, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. Opening a number of cities on the mainland will let in some foreign capital, which will serve as a supplement to the socialist economy and help promote the growth of the socialist productive forces. For example, when foreign capital is invested in Shanghai, it certainly does not mean that the entire city has gone capitalist. The same is true of Shenzhen, where socialism still prevails. The main part of China remains socialist.

CHAPTER 11

Concluding survey

Between 1839 and the beginning of the twenty-first century, China developed from an inward-looking feudal empire into a modern state. In that process it threw off foreign domination, underwent internal revolution and created an economy that made it a world power. This concluding chapter traces this transformation by surveying the key developments, with references, covered in the preceding chapters, under the following headings:

- ★ The government and rulers of China 1839–1997
- ★ The economy and the growth of industry 1839–1997
- ★ Society in China 1839–1997
- ★ China and the wider world 1839–1997
- ★ Ideologies and individuals behind economic growth 1860–1997

1 The government and rulers of China 1839–1997

The page numbers given in each section relate to the specific coverage in the text.

- ▶ *What major developments occurred in the structure and character of government in China?*
- ▶ *Who were the rulers of China in this period?*

Imperial China 1839–1912

pages 1–4, 17–20, 34–43

In 1839, China was ruled by an emperor of the Manchu dynasty. He governed from the Forbidden City, the centre of administration in the capital, Beijing. His right to rule was based on Confucianism, a philosophy that had pervaded China for over 2000 years and which taught that obedience to authority was the citizens' duty. However, imperial rule did not go unchallenged. Revolutionary movements developed which argued that China could not be free of dominating foreign influence unless it ended the imperial system.

Revolution 1911–12

pages 48–55, 56–61

The Manchu government's belated attempt to introduce reform and to lead the Boxer movement did not prevent the growth of opposition. In 1912, confronted by uncontrollable mutinies, the Manchu dynasty abdicated, to be replaced by a

republic, whose president was Yuan Shikai. Nominally, China was now ruled by a republican government in Beijing, but in reality effective central government had broken down.

The warlords 1916–27

pages 61–7, 67–71, 73–8

Exploiting the lack of strong central government, a number of military leaders claimed authority in their own regions. The result was that until the late 1920s China was ruled by warlords, generals who used their private armies to establish control in the local provinces. Resentment against the brutal warlord regimes intensified the twin desire of revolutionaries to destroy warlordism and end foreign dominance. The result was the formation of a United Front between the Nationalist Guomindang (GMD) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Initially the two parties cooperated in the Northern Expedition, a joint military campaign to overcome the warlords.

Nationalists versus Communists 1927–37

pages 78–80, 81–9, 102–7

In 1927, with the warlords largely broken, Jiang Jieshi, the GMD leader, turned on the CCP and attempted to obliterate it in the White Terror. Throughout Jiang's career he remained committed to the eradication of China's Communists. The result was an intermittent civil war between the GMD and the CCP from 1927 to 1949. The first stage in this was a series of encirclement campaigns, starting in 1927, in which Jiang's forces tried to crush the CCP's base in Jiangxi. In 1934, the Communists broke out to embark on the legendary Long March. Having reached Yanan, the survivors proceeded over the next decade, under Mao Zedong's leadership, to build a Chinese Communist soviet. This was a challenge to Jiang Jieshi, who claimed that he and his Nationalists were the legitimate government of China. The occupation of China by the Japanese after 1931 obliged the warring factions to combine, if only temporarily, in an anti-Japanese struggle.

Mao's China 1949–76

pages 116–26, 154–77, 187–222

Successful in the Civil War (1945–9) that followed the defeat of Japan in 1945, Mao was free to create the Communist People's Republic of China (PRC), ruled by the CCP. Oppressive methods were used to enforce central control. Initially the PRC drew on Soviet economic assistance, but in the mid-1950s, judging that the PRC was now strong enough, Mao embarked on the Great Leap Forward, an economic programme that led to the great famine of 1958–62. Troubled by what he regarded as growing opposition within the CCP, Mao withdrew temporarily from the centre of politics, leaving Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping to deal with the famine.

A power struggle ensued, which Mao, now raised to cult status by Lin Biao's propaganda, eventually ended by returning to centre stage in 1966. With the aim of leaving his indelible mark on China by ridding it of reactionaries, the ageing

Mao launched the Cultural Revolution. In a deliberately organised disruption, Mao enlisted the youthful Red Guards to obliterate China's history and tradition. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) were instructed to take over from the young, who were dispersed into the countryside to live with the peasants.

The fall of Lin Biao in 1971, following his involvement in an assassination plot against Mao, began a lessening of the intensity of the Cultural Revolution. Nevertheless, at Mao's death in 1976, the ultra-radical Gang of Four tried to return to the earlier violent extremes.

Deng Xiaoping's China 1976–97

pages 188–9, 200–13, 228–49, 266–7

Deng Xiaoping, who had been victimised during the Cultural Revolution, returned to prominence following the arrest of the Gang of Four. At the Third Plenum in 1978, he set the PRC on a new path by introducing policies that reversed much of what his predecessor had done. Believing that Mao's methods had been restrictive, Deng sought to develop China into a major industrial and commercial power by adopting the Four Modernisations.

Deng, however, had no intention of modernising the PRC politically. He insisted that the one-party rule of the CCP be maintained. This hard line frustrated China's aspirant young people who wanted to see the introduction of a Fifth Modernisation – democracy. Government resistance over this led by the late 1980s to the growth of a democracy movement prepared to engage in public demonstration. A tragic climax came in 1989 when PLA forces under government orders violently suppressed a student occupation of Tiananmen Square.

Yet, the suppression of the democracy movement and the worldwide condemnation it provoked did not seriously hinder the PRC's progress. By the time of Deng's death in 1997, the new China he had created had become a first-rank economic power. The readiness of the Chinese leaders who came after Deng to continue his policies proved how successful his revolution had been.

2 The economy and the growth of industry 1839–1997

▶ *What key economic developments occurred in China between 1839 and 1997?*

The imperial economy

Agriculture

pages 6–7, 8–9, 38–9

In the nineteenth century, China's internal economy was predominantly agricultural. The great majority of the people were peasants who rented the

land on which they worked from the landowner. The type of crops produced and animals reared in the various areas of China depended on the prevailing local climate and quality of the soil. The natural conservatism of the peasants and the notion of China's self-sufficiency resulted in an unwillingness to adopt efficient farming techniques. This created a major problem as the nation's rapidly expanding population made increasing demands on food production.

Trade

pages 7–10, 16–17, 28–9

Despite Manchu reluctance to admit that China needed trade with the outside world, foreign commerce had increased considerably by the 1830s, a trend which emphasised the importance of developing China's ports. Responding to European taste, tea became the most profitable Chinese export, a financial benefit that was largely negated by China's excessive imports of opium.

Industry

pages 26–37, 49–50, 51–6

In the later nineteenth century, in an attempt to offset foreign interference, China undertook a self-strengthening movement aimed at introducing economic reform. Leading figures in the movement were Zeng Guofan, Sheng Xuanhai and Li Hongzhang. As Manchu loyalists, they were instrumental in:

- improving government administration
- advancing commerce by deals with foreign companies
- developing China's financial strength through joint-stock companies
- expanding China's textile and mining industries
- improving China's carrying trade
- expanding China's communications system
- building railways in a nationwide development.

Republican China

pages 56–8, 68–9, 90–9

China's dependence on foreign capital increased after the 1911–12 revolution. Yuan Shikai borrowed heavily from abroad and Jiang Jieshi and the Nationalists also found themselves heavily indebted. Nevertheless, in the 1930s, Jiang's government took important initiatives to strengthen the economy:

- China's civil service was modernised.
- Schools and universities were expanded.
- The China Development Finance Corporation was formed to raise capital.
- A National Resources Commission was set up to promote industry.
- Transport and communications systems were developed.
- Government subsidies also went into the film and fashion industries.
- Telegraphy and road-building developments were undertaken.

Jiang Jieshi's plans for economic expansion were severely limited by the Japanese occupation which, from 1931, denied the Nationalists access to China's richest provinces and necessitated diverting resources to the war effort. The occupation was also a key factor in the development of hyperinflation, which by the 1940s had effectively destroyed China's currency.

The economy in Mao's China 1949–76

Mao's land policy

pages 86–7, 172–7, 165–7, 206–7

Before coming to power in 1949, Mao had already given notice of his economic intentions in his land policy. In the Yanan years, the Red Army had 'liberated' the CCP-controlled areas, by removing the landlords and redistributing the land to the peasants. The same anti-landlord policy was followed after 1949. This was a prelude to the reverse policy of collectivisation, taking land from the peasants, a move intended as part of the Great Leap Forward.

Industry

pages 163–72, 217–18, 223–4

Mao spoke of agricultural and industrial growth as 'walking on two legs'. His plans were based on the notion of massive collectives which would bring economic modernity to China. However, Mao's economic ambition outran his economic understanding. His refusal to consider proven capitalist methods of expansion denied the PRC the possibility of sustained industrial growth.

The economy under Deng Xiaoping 1976–97

pages 234–41, 257–60, 264–7

Deng Xiaoping's impact on the Chinese economy was so profound that it has been called 'Deng's revolution'. At the Third Plenum in 1978, Deng abandoned Mao's policies and redirected the Chinese economy in accordance with the Four Modernisations: agriculture, industry, education and defence.

These were overlapping programmes for developing the PRC as a modern industrial and commercial power capable of competing internationally. As an economic pragmatist, Deng was willing to operate according to the market rather than persevere with dated socialist concepts. Overcoming the fears of many Chinese who did not want to give up their 'iron rice bowls', Deng reintroduced the idea of competition and incentives in order to stimulate industrial productivity. The success of his long-term policies was evident by the time of his death in 1997. China's gross domestic product had grown annually since 1980 by an average of nine per cent and the PRC had become a major international commercial power.

3 Society in China 1839–1997

In what ways did the character of Chinese society change in the period 1839–1997?

Manchu society

pages 2–4, 22–5, 38–40

In 1839, China had a population of 300 million, of whom the Han were the largest ethnic group. They made up 95 per cent of the population, which was overwhelmingly rural. Society in imperial China was a hierarchy based on Confucian principles of deference to authority. This required the obedience of children to their parents, of wives to their husbands, of the people to those in authority.

Role of women

pages 5–6, 37, 39–43, 50

The emphasis of obedience had produced a patriarchal society which discriminated against women, who were treated as subordinates. Arranged marriages were the norm. One of the extreme forms by which women were controlled was foot-binding. Manchu China's restrictive social system aroused mounting criticism from both nationalists and revolutionaries.

Growth of the middle class

pages 26–8, 29–32, 37–8, 63–6

What stimulated criticism was the change in the character of the middle class, caused in part by the self-strengthening movement. The traditional middle class had been composed of the rural gentry. But the middle class produced by the self-strengthening movement was made up of urban-based businessmen and industrialists, who advocated fundamental social change. Their frustration explains why a significant number of them joined the Boxer revolt.

Social developments after 1911

pages 49–51, 55–9, 62–9, 89–99, 122–3

The disappointment of revolutionaries with the republic that superseded the imperial system had important social consequences. It gave rise to the 4 May Movement, a key aspect of which was the cult of science and the rejection of traditional values. Mao and the Communists aimed to exploit this in advancing their revolutionary ideas. However, for over two decades, it was the Nationalists who claimed power. Their social programme based on the Three People's Principles, with their goal of a socially just society, was never fully implemented under Jiang Jieshi. In part, this was because of the great economic difficulties China faced, made worse by the Japanese occupation. But it was also a consequence of the character of Jiang Jieshi's rule, which was dependent on financial support from interests that were unwilling to contemplate genuine social change.

Social change under Mao 1949–76

pages 154–61, 178–85, 209–10, 216–23

Mao was responsible for massive social upheaval in China:

- His collectivisation programme of the mid-1950s uprooted the peasants from their traditional way of life.
- The Great Leap Forward launched in 1958 created a huge famine in China, which proved lethal for millions.
- The Cultural Revolution (1966–76) added further deliberate social disruption as Mao endeavoured to create nothing less than a new society by destroying 'the four olds'.

Despite the coercive society that Mao forged, the CCP claimed that all power rested with the people. In practice, all social values were subordinated to Mao's political aim of enforcing conformity. The *laogai* prison system was a graphic example of this. Nevertheless, there were some positive aspects to Mao's social revolution; for example, education and health care undoubtedly improved. However, the impact of Mao's social revolution was the imposition of greater burdens on women, despite the CCP claim that they had been emancipated under Mao's regime.

Social change under Deng Xiaoping 1976–97

pages 234–41, 241–50

Deng deliberately reversed Mao's economic policies. This had profound social consequences. Deng's Four Modernisations aimed to put incentives back into the economy. The idea of reward for effort encouraged social mobility since opportunities were opened for advancement and promotion. The most striking feature of this was the growth in China's middle class:

- With the structure of Chinese society shifting from rural to urban, from agricultural to industrial, opportunities for individuals and groups to earn money in the new industries greatly expanded under Deng's schemes.
- This provided an impetus to the spread of the middle class, people with particular skills who were given the freedom to pursue their own economic aspirations.

4 China and the wider world 1839–1997

▶ *How did China's status as a nation change during the period 1839–1997?*

Manchu China and the West

The Opium Wars 1840–60

pages 3–4, 8–17, 261

China's sense of itself as a superior nation was shattered by its enforced contact with the West after 1840. Its crushing defeat by Britain in the Opium Wars of 1840–60 revealed imperial China's military weakness and led to the 'unequal treaties' which opened China to foreign domination.

Foreign encroachments 1860–1901

pages 22–5, 32–41

From 1860, growing numbers of foreign religious missionaries flocked to China. In response to this cultural affront, the self-strengthening movement developed, an effort to build an industrial economy that would make China independent of foreign control. However, by the end of the century, foreign domination had become even more marked. Defeat at the hands of the Japanese in 1895 led to loss of Chinese territory, a humiliation compounded by the 'scramble for concessions', 1898–9, in which the Western powers tightened their hold on China.

The Boxer failure 1898–1901

pages 41–3, 48–50

Desperate to regain prestige, the Manchu government joined the Boxer rebellion, an expression of China's outrage against the exploiting foreigner. However, an alliance of Western powers and Japan suppressed the rebellion with great severity. China's humiliation was deepened by the Boxer Protocol, 1901, which imposed heavy reparations on the Chinese. In the following decade, the Americans enforced strict limitations on the entry of Chinese workers into the USA. Chinese protests against such treatment were frequent, but were inhibited by China's need to preserve workable relations with Western foreigners, the reality being that many Chinese depended for their jobs and income on foreign companies in China.

The republic and the wider world

pages 56–61, 63–7, 70–1, 73–7

The republic that replaced the imperial system remained heavily reliant on foreign funds, as shown by Yuan Shikai's negotiating of a large loan from an international consortium. Japan, a member of the consortium, exploited Chinese difficulties by imposing the 21 Demands on China in 1915. Japan also used its alliance with Western Allies in the First World War to lay claim to the captured German territories in the East, which had originally belonged to China. When

Japan's grab was legitimised in the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, China's fury expressed itself in the 4 May Movement.

China's revolutionary parties, the GMD and the CCP, shared a common hatred of foreign domination. Yet, ironically, both parties were greatly inspired by foreign ideas: the CCP by the Marxist ideas that had led to the Russian Revolution of 1917, the GMD by liberal political ideas that Sun Yatsen had encountered in his contacts with Westerners.

Japanese encroachment 1931–45

pages 102–5, 106–16

The weight of the Japanese occupation between 1931 and 1941 made it difficult for China to advance its demand for acceptance as an independent state. Its appeals to the USA and the League of Nations went unheeded and it was not until 1941, with the entry of the USA into the Second World War, that Nationalist China began to receive the recognition that Jiang Jieshi had always sought. The Pacific War and the defeat of Japan in 1945 brought great benefits to Jiang and China. Jiang was elevated to the status of international statesman, and Nationalist China became one of the five-member United Nations Security Council. The USA continued to recognise Jiang's GMD regime as the true China even after its defeat and expulsion from the mainland in 1949.

China's international status under Mao 1949–76

pages 121–2, 126, 130–49, 149–51

The speed with which Mao consolidated Communist control over the whole of mainland China, followed soon after by its entry into the Korean War in 1950, convinced the West that it now faced a second world power committed to Communist expansion. Mutual distrust arising from the USA's refusal to recognise the PRC as the true China turned into three decades of tension, made more dangerous by such factors as China's development of nuclear weapons and Mao's consistent fears of an American attack. It took until the early 1970s for an improvement in relations, heralded by US President Nixon's official visit to Mao in 1972.

Contrary to Western fears, the USSR and the PRC, after early cooperation, developed a fierce rivalry in which ideological differences and Mao's personality clash with successive Soviet leaders figured prominently. Mao's concerns over de-Stalinisation and Soviet anxieties aroused by the PRC's development as a nuclear power by 1967 intensified Sino-Soviet hostility. By 1969, Sino-Soviet relations were at their lowest point, with the two sides involved in a nuclear stand-off.

During the Cultural Revolution, China's aggressive attitude towards foreigners inside and outside China further damaged the PRC's foreign reputation. However, in Mao's final years, his less rigid attitude towards the West and his continuing wish to isolate the Soviet Union internationally combined to ease China's relations with the outside world. A product of this was the Nixon visit to Beijing, an event which followed the USA's diplomatic recognition of the PRC.

Notwithstanding Mao's mellowing, the position at his death in 1976 was that the PRC was still formally committed to international class struggle.

China's international status under Deng Xiaoping 1976–97

pages 252–7, 257–60, 260–3, 264–7

Deng was fully committed to China's control of its own border territories. The PRC's military involvement in Cambodia and Vietnam was a consequence of this. Yet such moves were essentially a protection of China's national interests. Impressive Marxist theorist though he was, Deng did not follow Marxist objectives in his foreign policy. He judged that to achieve the modernising of China it was necessary to cooperate with the world's commercial powers. It was for this reason that Deng made a priority of reconciling the PRC with its former enemies, notably Japan, the USA and Britain. The peaceful return of Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997 was one of the major successes in Deng's foreign policy. How far he had elevated the status of the PRC since 1978 was illustrated by its being awarded 'Most Favored Nation' status by the USA and by its membership of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). At the time of Deng's death in 1997, China was poised to become a leading global power.

5 Ideologies and individuals behind economic growth 1860–1997

- *What were the main ideas promoting economic growth?*
- *Who were the key individuals promoting these ideas?*

Ideas and ideologies as factors promoting change 1860–1997

The self-strengthening movement of the 1860s and 1870s

pages 26–32

The movement aimed at introducing economic reforms as a means of preventing further foreign domination of China. Among the areas earmarked for growth and improvement were industry, banking and communications.

The cult of science in the 4 May Movement 1915–24

pages 63–7

The 4 May Movement saw a quickening of interest in those Western ideas that offered a solution to China's problems. Chinese scholars, judging that the Confucian-dominated ideas of traditional Chinese scholarship were no longer adequate, were looking for ways to speed modernisation. That is why they were attracted by Western science, whose experimental method and applied research

had produced the Industrial Revolution. Chinese progressives spoke of 'Science and Democracy' as the essential requirements in China's development.

Marxism and the Soviet inspired cult of heavy industry in the early 1950s

In the Soviet Union in the 1930s, Stalin had asserted that a Marxist revolution was impossible to consolidate unless it rested on a strong industrial base. For him, industry meant heavy industry. He had made a cult of it, believing Western strength had been based on iron and steel production. Mao, who was under Soviet influence in the early 1950s, followed this approach in his plans for China.

pages 138–40, 163–7

Modifying Soviet Marxism and 'walking on two legs' 1958

Mao used the term 'walking on two legs' to express his belief that China could simultaneously achieve growth in food production and industrial output. His Great Leap Forward (1958–61) was intended to free China from its former dependence on Soviet direction. He was determined to match the Soviet Union's economic achievement but without following Soviet methods. China would achieve industrial 'lift-off' by harnessing what he regarded as the nation's greatest resource – its massive population.

pages 163–72, 172–7

Embracing capitalism in the 1980s and 1990s

On the understanding that practicalities, not Marxist theory, ought to determine economic planning, China under Deng Xiaoping moved towards capitalism in the 1980s. He took the view that if a plan worked, keep it; if it did not, scrap it. If the market produced better results than rigid adherence to Marxist concepts, then let the market operate freely. If contact with the capitalist West increased China's trade and commerce, then encourage such contact.

pages 234–41, 264–7

The roles of individuals in promoting economic growth 1860–1997

Li Hongzhang

An outstanding figure in the self-strengthening movement, Li Hongzhang's intention was to sustain the Manchu dynasty by modernising China in such a way that it would both prevent internal rebellion and ultimately match the strength of the foreign powers in China. Li became internationally acknowledged as China's leading statesman. His significance is evident in the range of economic initiatives with which he was associated, including advances in administration, commerce, banking and railway construction.

pages 25–9

Sheng Xuanhuai

Of comparable significance to Li Hongzhang as a moderniser, Sheng became transport minister in the imperial government. Impressed by the success of Western business methods, Sheng chose to adopt them as the best means

pages 29–32

for China to make its own economic advances. He judged that his country's antiquated management system had to be replaced by an efficient bureaucracy. He adopted this approach in all the many organisations which he founded or for which he became responsible. These included banking, shipping, textiles, mining, railways and telegraphy.

Sung Tzu-wen

pages 91–6

Sung was one of the influential individuals in the Nationalist government's reform programmes. A highly successful businessman, he drew on his contacts in the international money world in his plans for giving the Nationalist government financial stability. As a finance minister, he achieved balanced budgets and modernised China's banking system. Sung, more than anyone, was responsible for such financial and economic progress as China made under Nationalist rule.

Mao Zedong

pages 82–9, 133–4, 141–4, 163–72, 172–7

Mao held that history had reached the stage where China, having lagged behind the rest of the advanced industrialised world, would now surpass it purely through the dedicated efforts of the Chinese people led by their inspired Communist government. China would bypass the stages through which the advanced nations had gone, and go straight from being a rural, agricultural economy to becoming an urban, industrial one.

Deng Xiaoping

pages 188–9, 232–3, 234–41, 257–60, 264–7

Deng's basic economic approach was captured in his favourite saying; 'It does not matter whether a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice.' During Mao's time, such apparent disregard for strict socialist planning was thought too extreme. But after 1976, with Mao gone and opponents of economic liberalising removed, the time had come to apply Deng's ideas. He defined his aims as: invigorating China's domestic economy, opening Chinese trade to the world, encouraging entrepreneurs and inviting foreign investment.

Key developments

Establishment of the first modern bank in China 1897

pages 29–30

Largely the creation of Sheng Xuanhuai, the Imperial Bank of China attempted to stabilise the nation's financial system. It was empowered to issue its own currency, which was intended to be a first step towards making China financially independent of the foreign powers. However, Sheng knew that the bank could not function successfully unless it cooperated with the foreign financial houses in China, which was why he was willing to link the new bank with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC). Within its first two years of operation, Sheng's bank had attracted considerable foreign investment and had won the confidence of Chinese businesses.

China Development Finance Corporation in the 1930s

pages 91–4

Established in 1934, the China Development Finance Corporation (CDFC) was largely the work of Sung Tzu-wen. His objective was to raise capital from within China from enterprises prepared to invest in industry. The CDFC became China's major institution as a dealer and broker in foreign investment and exchange.

Great Leap Forward 1958–61

pages 163–72, 172–7

The Great Leap Forward aimed at turning the PRC into a modern industrial state in the shortest possible time. Mao assumed that by sheer manpower China could solve all the problems of industrial development. It is certainly true that prodigious feats were achieved by manual labour alone during the Great Leap Forward. Mechanical diggers were shunned in favour of the earth being moved by the hands of the workers. Giant bridges, canals and dams were constructed. These were lauded by the CCP as the visible proof of China's resurgence. Mass effort, however, failed to achieve economic lift-offs. By ignoring economic realities, the Great Leap Forward became a 'magnificent absurdity'.

Launch of the Four Modernisations 1978

pages 231–3, 234–41, 257–67

The Four Modernisations were the first steps towards turning China into a capitalist economy. They proposed the reform of agriculture, industry, education and defence. They represented an essentially 'hands off' policy. Administrative concerns would not be allowed to overrule economic considerations. Deng stressed that two fundamental adjustments had to be made: the restoration of the market and the opening of China to foreign trade.

Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. How far do you agree that the creation of the Chinese Republic in 1912 was the key turning point in the government of China in the period 1860–1997?
2. 'Of all the leaders of China in the period 1839–1989, Mao Zedong came closest to achieving his aims.' How far do you agree with this statement?
3. To what extent did the self-strengthening movement in late imperial China lay the basis for subsequent developments in Chinese industry up to 1989?
4. How accurate is it to say that Deng Xiaoping's reforms were the most successful policies in promoting economic growth in China in the years 1860–1997?
5. 'Confucian values continued to shape Chinese society throughout the years 1839–1997.' How far do you agree?
6. How important was the 4 May Movement (1919–24) in the development of Chinese attitudes towards science and society during the period 1860–1997?
7. 'In the years 1860–1997, the most important changes to Chinese society were those made during the Cultural Revolution of 1966–76. How far do you agree?
8. Assess the view that the advantages China derived from its contact with foreign powers in the period 1839–1989 far outweighed the disadvantages.
9. How important a stage in the development of China's international relations between 1860 and 1989 was the Japanese occupation of China, 1931–45?
10. 'Among the economic reformers in China, 1839–1997, Li Hongzhang was the most important because his ideas set the pattern for the industrial development that all the others followed?' How far do you agree with this statement?
11. To what extent was Mao Zedong's ideology the most significant contribution to promoting growth in China's economy in the period 1860–1997?

Sources guidance

Edexcel's Paper 3, Option 38.1: The Making of Modern China, 1860–1997 is assessed by an exam comprising three sections:

- Section A is a source analysis assessment. It tests your knowledge of one of the key topics in depth.
- Section B requires you to write one essay from a choice of two, again testing your knowledge of key topics and depth (see page 290 for guidance on this).
- Section C requires you to write one essay from a choice of two. Questions relate to themes in breadth and test your knowledge of change over a period of at least 100 years (see page 294 for guidance on this).

The sections of the exam relate to the sections of the exam paper in the following way:

Section A and Section B	Test your knowledge of the key topics in depth	China and the world: • The opening up of China to foreigners 1860–70 • Defeat and humiliation 1894–1901 • The Japanese threat 1931–41 • The Sino-Soviet split 1958–69 • Reconciliation with old enemies and the return of Hong Kong 1978–97
Section C	Tests your knowledge of the themes in breadth	Industrialisation and the making of a titan 1860–1997 • The growth of industry • Ideologies and individuals behind economic growth

Paper 3 is available only at A level, therefore there is no AS level version of this paper.

Paper 3 Section A

Section A of Paper 3 comprises a single compulsory question which refers to one source.

The question

The Section A question will begin with the following stem: 'Assess the value of the source for revealing …', for example:

> Assess the value of Source 1 (page 286) for revealing the character of the Shining Red Lantern movement and its involvement the Boxer Uprising. Explain your answer, using the source, the information given about its origin and your own knowledge about the historical context.

The source

The source will be a primary or contemporary source: it will have been written in the period that you are studying: *c.*1860–1997. The source will be around 350 words long. It will be accompanied by a brief passage that sets out the essential provenance of the source. See Source 1 on page 286 as an example.

SOURCE 1

From verbal accounts by eyewitnesses, collected by researchers at Shandong University who compiled an oral history of the Boxer Uprising, published in 1980.

When I was ten, I went to Fenglou to watch people play with the Shining Red Lantern. Their practice ground was set up in a house and it was really exciting and crazy! All these big girls were dressed from head to toe in red. Their footbinding cloths were red, their socks were red, their shoes were red, their pants were red, their shirts were all red and they wore a red hair wrapping. Why even the little string to tie on the head wrapping was red! They carried red lanterns and waved red fans. Sometimes they practiced during the day and sometimes at night. They were all girls from poor families. Some couldn't afford to buy red clothes so they tore off strips of cloth from their bedding and dyed it to make their red costume.

[Interview in 1966 with Lin Zhuwang, aged 73, of Chengguan Commune, Renping county.]

Girls who joined the Boxers were called 'Shining Red Lanterns'. They dressed all in red. In one hand they had a little red lantern and in the other a little red fan. They carried a basket in the crook of their arm. When bullets were shot at them they waved their fans and the bullets were caught in the basket. You couldn't hit them! Some were also possessed by spirits and would say that they were Ma Guiying or Hu Jinchan [heroines in Chinese legend].

[Interview in 1965 with Yu Yunze, aged 82, of Yegantun Commune, Renping county.]

In every village there were girls who studied the Shining Red Lantern. In my village there were eight or ten of them. They all carried a red lantern in their right hand and a red fan in their left hand. They'd wave their fans and go up into the sky. They didn't want people to watch so they'd practice at night when it was dark. There was a song then that went:

> *'Learn to be a Boxer, study the Red Lantern.*
> *Kill all the foreign devils and make the churches burn.'*

[Interview with Li Mingde, aged 74, of Gaotang county.]

Understanding the question

To answer the question successfully you must understand it. The question is written precisely in order to make sure that you understand the task. Each part of the question has a specific meaning.

Assess the value of Source 1[1] for revealing the character of the Shining Red Lantern movement[2] and its involvement the Boxer Uprising[3].

1 You must evaluate how useful the source could be to a historian. Evaluating the extent of usefulness involves considering its value and limitations in the light of your own knowledge about the source's historical content. Important information about the context of the source is included in the information given about the source.

2 The question focuses on two specific enquiries that the source might be useful for. The first is the aims of the Boxer Uprising.

3 The second enquiry is about the role women played in it.

In essence, you should use the source, the information about the source and your own knowledge of the historical context to make a judgement about how far the source is useful to a historian engaged in two specific enquiries. Crucially, you must consider both enquiries. An answer which focuses on only one of the enquiries is unlikely to do well.

Skill	At a basic level …	At a higher level …	At the highest levels …
Interpret and analyse source material	This means you can understand the source, and select, copy, paraphrase and summarise the source to help answer the question	Your interpretation of the source includes the ability to explain, analyse and make inferences based on the source	You will be expected to analyse the source in a sophisticated way. This includes the ability to distinguish between information, opinions and arguments contained in the source
Apply knowledge of historical context in relation to the source	This means the ability to link the source to your knowledge of the context in which the source was written, and using this knowledge to expand or support the information contained in the source	You will be able to use your contextual knowledge to make inferences, and to expand, support or challenge the details mentioned in the source	You will examine the value and limits of the material contained in the source by interpreting the source in the context of the values and assumptions of the society from which it is taken
Evaluate the usefulness and weight of the source material	Evaluation of the source will be based on simplistic criteria about reliability and bias	Evaluation of the source will be based on the nature and purpose of the source	Evaluation of the source will be based on a valid criterion that is justified in the course of the essay. You will also be able to distinguish between the value of different aspects of the source

Make sure your source evaluation is sophisticated. Avoid crude statements about bias, and avoid simplistic assumptions such as: 'a source written immediately after an event is reliable, whereas a source written years later is unreliable'.

Where relevant, try to see things from the writer's perspective:

- How does the writer or speaker understand the world?
- What assumptions does the writer or speaker have?
- Who is the writer or speaker trying to influence?
- What views may the writer or speaker be trying to challenge?

Basic skill: comprehension

The most basic source skill is comprehension: understanding what the source means. There are a variety of techniques that you can use to aid comprehension. For example, using the sources included in this book and in past exam papers, you could:

- Read the sources out loud.
- Look up any words that you don't understand and make a glossary.
- Make flash cards containing brief biographies of the writers of the sources.

You can demonstrate comprehension by copying from, paraphrasing and summarising the sources. However, keep this to the minimum as comprehension is a lower-level skill and you need to apply higher-level skills.

Advanced skill: contextualising the sources

First, to analyse the sources correctly, you need to understand them in the context in which they were written. Source 1 (page 286) illustrates the character of the Shining Red Lanterns in the Boxer movement. Your job is to understand the values and assumptions behind the source:

- One way of contextualising the source is to consider the nature, origins and purposes of the source. However, this can lead to a formulaic essay.

- An alternative is to consider two levels of context. First, you should establish the general context. In this case, the statements in Source 1 were made by eyewitnesses many years after the Boxer Uprising. Second, notwithstanding the fact that the statements were made long after the event they describe, you can look for specific references to contemporary events, people or debates in the sources. For example, when considering the reasons for the Boxer movement, the details in the source can be put in context in the following way:
  - 'Girls who joined the Boxers were called "Shining Red Lanterns"'. Although imperial China was a patriarchal society, women were to play a prominent role in the Boxer movement.
  - 'They dressed all in red'. In Chinese tradition the colour red represented power and struggle.
  - 'They were all girls from poor families'. The Boxer movement was composed of a variety of groups with numerically the poorest elements of society the most strongly represented.
  - 'When bullets were shot at them they waved their fans and the bullets were caught in the basket'. There was a belief among the Boxers, men and women, that they were immune from the effects of gunshots.
  - 'They'd wave their fans and go up into the sky'. Superstition and belief in magic was a notable feature of many Boxers.
  - 'Learn to be a Boxer, study the Red Lantern'. The eyewitness vividly remembers the song that inspired the women.
  - 'Kill all the foreign devils and make the churches burn'. The line clearly expresses the deep Chinese resentment towards foreigners, intensified by the recent scramble for concessions. The vividness of the reminiscences suggests how strong an impression the Shining Red Lanterns had made on the eyewitnesses when they were young.

Using context to make judgements: writing the answer

- Start by establishing the general context of the source:
  - What was going on at the time when the source was written, or the time of the events described in the source?
  - What are the key debates that the source might be contributing to?
- Next, look for key words and phrases that establish the specific context. Does the source refer to specific people, events or books that might be important?
- Make sure your contextualisation focuses on the question.
- Use the context when evaluating the usefulness and limitations of the source.

Here is an example:

Source 1 is valuable to a historian investigating the Shining Red Lanterns because it highlights the essential characteristics of the movement and its involvement in the Boxer Uprising. First, there is considerable evidence in the source that the Boxers were an anti-foreigner movement. For example, the line in a popular chant of the time, 'Kill all the foreign devils', is a reference to the bitter anger aroused among the Chinese by foreign seizures of territory during the scramble for concessions in the 1890s. This piece of evidence is supported and strengthened by the rest of line 'and make the churches burn', an illustration of the particular and passionate Chinese hatred of the foreign missionaries whose presence in large numbers in China since the 1860s had deeply offended Chinese cultural susceptibilities. Second, the reference by the eyewitnesses to the poverty of the Shining Red Lanterns confirms what is known about the social composition of the Boxer

movement. The Shining Red Lanterns were part of the large peasant element that joined with the gentry and the Qing imperial court in a combined attack on the foreigners; this was the first significant coming together of the main groups in Chinese society to resist outside domination. Third, the source illustrates the superstition and mystical belief in their invulnerability in the face of Western weaponry that motivated many of the Boxers to rise against the exploiters of their country. In this sense, the source is extremely useful as it points to a variety of complementary motives behind the Boxer Uprising, specifically that it was inspired by anti-foreigner hatred towards the territorial and religious exploitation and drew on a Chinese sense of invincibility.

This paragraph makes inferences from details in the source to uncover a variety of motives, showing that Source 1 is of considerable use for this enquiry. Significantly, for the answer to reach a high level, it would also have to deal with the other enquiry in the question: the extent of the source's usefulness for revealing the role that women played in the Boxer Uprising.

Essay guidance (1)

Paper 3 Section B

To get a high grade in Section B of Paper 3, your essay must contain four essential qualities:

- focused analysis
- relevant detail
- supported judgement
- organisation, coherence and clarity.

This section focuses on the following aspects of exam technique:

- The nature of the question.
- Planning an answer to the question.
- Writing a focused introduction.
- Deploying relevant detail.
- Writing analytically.
- Reaching a supported judgement.

The nature of the question

Section B questions are designed to test the depth of your historical knowledge. They can focus on relatively short periods, or single events. Additionally, they can focus on different historical processes or 'concepts'. These include:

- cause
- consequence
- change/continuity
- similarity/difference
- significance.

These different question focuses require slightly different approaches:

Cause	**1** How far were the activities of foreign missionaries in China responsible for the Tianjin massacre of 1870?
Consequence	**2** To what extent did the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5 prepare the way for the scramble for concessions?
Continuity and change	**3** 'China was more capable of resisting Japanese occupation in 1941 than it had been in 1937.' How far do you agree with this statement?
Similarities and differences	**4** 'Mao Zedong's disagreements with Khrushchev were the same as those he had had with Stalin.' How far do you agree with this statement?
Significance	**5** How significant was the Joint Agreement of 1984 to the peaceful return of Hong Kong to China in 1997?

Some questions include a 'stated factor'. A common type of stated factor question would ask how far one factor caused something; for example, for question 1 in the table: 'How far were the activities of foreign missionaries in China responsible for the Tianjin massacre of 1870?', you would be expected to evaluate the importance of the activities of foreign missionaries – the 'stated factor' – compared to other factors.

Planning your answer

It is crucial that you understand the focus of the question. Therefore, read the question carefully before you start planning. Check:

- The chronological focus: which years should your essay deal with?
- The topic focus: what aspect of your course does the question deal with?
- The conceptual focus: is this a causes, consequences, change/continuity, similarity/difference or significance question?

For example, for question 5 in the table on page 290 you could point these out as follows:

How significant[1] was the Joint Agreement of 1984[2] to the peaceful return of Hong Kong to China[3] in 1997[4]?

1 Conceptual focus: significance, specifically to the peaceful return.
2 Topic focus: Joint Agreement.
3 Topic focus: return of Hong Kong.
4 Chronological focus: 1984–97.

Your plan should reflect the task that you have been set. Section B asks you to write an analytical, coherent and well-structured essay from your own knowledge, which reaches a supported conclusion in around 40 minutes.

- To ensure that your essay is coherent and well structured, it should comprise a series of paragraphs, each focusing on a different point.
- Your paragraphs should be logically ordered. For example, you could write your paragraphs in order of importance, so you begin with the most important issues and end with the least important.
- In essays where there is a 'stated factor', it is a good idea to start with the stated factor before moving on to the other points.
- To make sure you keep to time, you should aim to write three or four paragraphs plus an introduction and a conclusion.

The opening paragraph

The opening paragraph should fulfil the following:

- answer the question directly
- set out your essential argument
- outline the factors or issues that you will discuss
- define key terms used in the question (where necessary).

Different questions require you to define different terms, for example:

A level question	Key terms
'China was more capable of resisting Japanese occupation in 1941 than it had been in 1937.' How far do you agree with this statement?	Here it is worth defining 'capable of resisting' and 'Japanese occupation'
How accurate is it to say that it was the GMD–CCP conflict rather than Japan's military superiority that accounts for the continuing Japanese occupation between 1931 and 1941?	In this example, it is worth distinguishing between the GMD–CCP conflict and Japan's military superiority

Here's an example introduction in answer to question 4 in the table on page 290:

'Mao Zedong's disagreements with Khrushchev were the same as those he had had with Stalin.' How far do you agree with this statement?

Mao Zedong's disagreements with Khrushchev were undoubtedly the same as those he had had with Stalin[1]. The two conflicts both derived from a personality clash between Mao and the two Soviet leaders[2]. Additionally, Mao was concerned with what he regarded as basic Soviet hostility to the PRC. He feared that for great power reasons the Soviet Union under both Stalin and Khrushchev was intent on encroaching on Chinese territory, undermining China internationally and preventing it from challenging the Soviet Union's claim to leadership of the Communist world. These concerns were the consistent preoccupation for Mao in his dealing with successive Soviet leaders[3].

1 The essay starts with a clear focus on the question.
2 This sentence simultaneously defines disagreements with Khrushchev and provides an initial answer to the first part of the question.
3 This sentence simultaneously defines 'those he had had with Stalin' and provides an initial answer to the second part of the question.

The opening paragraph: advice

- Do not write more than a couple of sentences on general background knowledge. This is unlikely to focus explicitly on the question.
- After defining key terms, refer back to these definitions when justifying your conclusion.
- The introduction should reflect the rest of the essay. Do not make one argument in your introduction and then make a difference argument in the essay.

Deploying relevant detail

Paper 3 tests the depth of your historical knowledge. Therefore, you will need to deploy historical detail. In the main body of the essay your paragraphs should begin with a clear point, be full of relevant detail and end with an explanation or evaluation. A detailed answer might include statistics, proper names, dates and technical terms. For example, if you are writing a paragraph about Mao and Khrushchev, you might include the reference to their humiliating tit-for-tat treatment of each other on their exchange visits and their mutual exchange of insults and name-calling.

Writing analytically

The quality of your analysis is one of the key factors that determines the mark you achieve. Writing analytically means clearly showing the relationships between the ideas in your essay. Analysis includes two key skills: explanation and evaluation.

Explanation

Explanation means giving reasons. An explanatory sentence has three parts:

- a claim: a statement that something is true or false
- a reason: a statement that justifies the claim
- a relationship: a word or phrase that shows the relationship between the claim and the reason.

Imagine you are answering question 1 in the table on page 290:

> How far were the activities of foreign missionaries in China responsible for the Tianjin massacre of 1870?

Your paragraph on the activities of foreign missionaries should start with a clear point, which would be supported by a series of examples. Finally, you would round off the paragraph with some explanation:

*Therefore, the activities of foreign missionaries were the principal reason for the Tianjin massacre***[1]** *because***[2]** *they rode roughshod over local Chinese sensitivities***[3]**.

1 Claim: a statement that something is true or false.
2 Relationship: a statement justifying the claim.
3 Reason: a statement that shows the relationship between the claim and the reason.

Make sure of the following:

- The reason you give genuinely justifies the claim that you have made.
- Your explanation is focused on the question.

Reaching a supported judgement

Your essay should reach a supported judgement. The obvious place to do this is in the conclusion of your essay. Even so, the judgement should reflect the findings of your essay. The conclusion should present:

- a clear judgement that answers the question
- an evaluation of the evidence that supports the judgement.

Finally, the evaluation should reflect valid criteria.

Evaluation and criteria

Evaluation means weighing up to reach a judgement. Therefore, evaluation requires you to:

- summarise both sides of the issue
- reach a conclusion that reflects the proper weight of both sides.

So, for question 1 in the table on page 290:

> How far were the activities of foreign missionaries in China responsible for the Tianjin massacre of 1870?

the conclusion might look like this:

In conclusion, the activities of foreign missionaries in China were principally, although not solely, responsible for the Tianjin massacre because they intensified anti-foreigner resentment among the Chinese people[1]. Clearly, the actions of the Chinese activists also played a part[2]. Despite being well intentioned, the missionaries' determination to impose their values led to their adopting a patronising and superior air towards the Chinese. This left them open to the accusation, albeit largely unfounded, that they were colluding with local gangsters in kidnapping and forcibly baptising local children[3]. Although local activists undoubtedly exacerbated the problem by initiating the physical attacks on foreigners and the Tianjin Cathedral, the missionaries' reaction in appealing to the French legation to suppress the troubles led to the Chinese being treated with studied contempt. Therefore, the activities of foreign missionaries were principally responsible for the Tianjin massacre[4].

1 The conclusion starts with a clear judgement that answers the question.
2 This sentence begins the process of weighing up the different factors involved by acknowledging that local activists also played a role.
3 The conclusion summarises the missionaries' culpability for the massacre.
4 The essay ends with a final judgement that is supported by the evidence of the essay.

The judgement is supported in part by evaluating the evidence and in part by linking it to valid criteria. In this case, the criterion is the distinction between the behaviour of the missionaries and that of the Chinese activists.

Essay guidance (2)

Paper 3 Section C

Section C is similar in many ways to Section B. Therefore, you need the same essential skills in order to get a high grade:

- focused analysis
- relevant detail
- supported judgement
- organisation, coherence and clarity.

Nonetheless, there are some differences in terms of the style of the question and the approach to the question in Sections B and C. Therefore, this section focuses on the following aspects of exam technique:

- The nature of the question.
- Planning your answer.
- Advice for Section C.

The nature of the question

Section C questions focus on the two themes in breadth:

- The growth of industry 1860–1997.
- Ideologies and individuals behind economic growth 1860–1997.

Questions can address either theme or both themes. There are two questions in Section C, of which you must answer one. Section C questions are designed to test the breadth of your historical knowledge, and your ability to analyse change over time. Therefore, questions will focus on long periods of no less than 100 years.

Section C questions have a variety of forms but they will always focus on either:

- the causes of change: for example, the factors, forces or individuals that led to change

or

- the nature of change: the ways in which things changed.

Significantly, the exam paper may contain two causes of change questions or two nature of change questions: you are not guaranteed one of each. Finally, questions can focus on different aspects of change over time:

- Comparative questions: ask you to assess the extent of change and continuity of an aspect of the period.
- Patterns of change questions: ask you to assess differences in terms of the rate, extent or significance of change at different points in the chronology.
- Turning point questions: ask you to assess which changes were more significant.

Comparative question	'The key factor in promoting China's economic development in the period 1860–1997 was its adoption of Western technologies.' How far do you agree with this statement?
Patterns of change question	How accurate is it to say that there was a continuous development of Chinese industry in the period 1860–1997?
Turning point question	How far do you agree that the reforms introduced under Deng Xiaoping between 1978 and 1997 were the key turning point in the modernising of the Chinese economy in the period 1860–1997?

Planning your answer

It is crucial that you understand the focus of the question to make an effective plan. Therefore, read the question carefully before you start planning. Different questions require a different approach. Here are some suggestions about how to tackle some of the common types of question.

Comparative question

'The key factor in promoting China's economic development in the period 1860–1997 was its adoption of Western technologies.' How far do you agree with this statement?

This is a comparative question which focuses on the causes of change. In this case you should examine the significance of 'adoption of Western technologies', the stated factor, and compare it to other possible causes of change.

Patterns of change question

> How accurate is it to say that there was a continuous development of Chinese industry in the period 1860–1997?

This is a patterns of change question which focuses on the nature of change. Here, you should examine the pattern of the development of Chinese industry in the period 1860–1997. You should consider how far development took place at an even rate, as opposed to developing in fits and starts.

Turning point question

> How far do you agree that the reforms introduced under Deng Xiaoping between 1978 and 1997 were the key turning point in the modernising of the Chinese economy in the period 1860–1997?

This is a turning point question which focuses on the nature of change. Therefore, you should examine the significance of the stated turning point, and compare it to two or three other turning points from the period 1860–1997. Significantly, you should not just focus on the reforms, or the years 1978–97: you must consider other possible turning points. Additionally, when considering how far an event was a turning point you must consider both the changes it caused *and* the ways in which things stayed the same.

Advice for Section C

In many ways a Section C essay should display the same skills as a Section B essay (see page 290). However, Section C essays focus on a much longer period than Section B essays and this has an impact on how you approach them.

The most important difference concerns the chronology. To answer a Section C question properly you must address the whole chronology, in this case the period 1860–1997. In practice, this means choosing examples from across the whole range of the period. Specifically, it is a good idea to have examples from the early part of the period, the middle of the period and the end of the period. For example, if you were answering the question:

> How far do you agree that the reforms introduced under Deng Xiaoping between 1978 and 1997 were the key turning point in the modernising of the Chinese economy in the period 1860–1997?

The question states a possible turning point from 1978 to the end of the period. Therefore, if you are considering other possible turning points you should choose one from the early part of the chronology and one from the middle to make sure you cover the whole period.

Equally, if you are dealing with the question:

> How accurate is it to say that there was a continuous development of Chinese industry in the period 1860–1997?

you should analyse examples of the development of Chinese industry throughout the whole period. These could include developments such as:

- early: the growth of the textile industry in the late Qing empire
- middle: growth under Mao's first Five-Year Plan 1953–7
- late: Deng's Four Modernisations after 1978.

In so doing, you would be addressing the full chronological range of the question.

Essay guidance

In the OCR Unit Y317 China and its Rulers 1839–1989 there are two elements to the component:

- The thematic essay, which will require you to consider developments over approximately 100 years. You will answer two essays from a choice of three.
- The in-depth interpretation element where you will comprehend, analyse and evaluate the ways in which the past has been interpreted by historians.

Essay skills

There are a number of skills that you need to develop if you are to reach the higher levels in the marking bands:

- understand the wording of the question
- plan a thematic answer to the question set
- write a focused opening paragraph
- avoid irrelevance and description
- write analytically and thematically
- make comparisons within the themes, showing similarity and difference across the whole period
- write a conclusion which reaches a supported judgement based on the argument in the main body of the essay.

The skills are made very clear by both mark schemes, which emphasise that the answer must:

- focus on the demands of the question
- be supported by accurate and relevant factual knowledge
- be analytical and well structured
- reach a supported and developed judgement about the issue in the question
- demonstrate evidence of well-developed synthesis across the whole period.

These skills are the same as those you have developed for essay writing in Units 1 and 2. However, in this unit there is a significant emphasis on *synthesis* across the whole period.

Understanding the wording of the question

To stay focused on the question set, it is important to read the question carefully and focus on the key words and phrases. Unless you directly address the demands of the question you will not score highly. Remember that in questions where there is a named factor you must write a good analytical paragraph about the given factor, even if you argue that it was not the most important.

Types of questions you might find in the exam	The themes you might consider in answering them
1 Assess the impact of industrialisation on the development of Chinese society in the period from 1839 to 1989.	You should weigh up the impact of industrialisation, both its positive and negative impacts, selecting key stages to analyse, for example: • Industrial growth under the late Qing • The GMD's industrial programme • Mao's Great Leap Forward • Deng's Four Modernisations.
2 'Mao's Cultural Revolution was the most important turning point in the development of Chinese government.' How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1839 to 1989?	You might consider the relative importance of the Cultural Revolution by comparing it with such other developments as: • The creation of the republic in 1912 • Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist government • The Communist takeover in 1949.

3 Assess the view that the Japanese occupation, 1931–45, was the most important stage in the development of China's international relations between 1839 and 1989.	You should consider a range of factors, including the positive and negative impact of foreign contacts that might include: • The Opium Wars • The Boxer Uprising • Sino-Soviet tensions 1959–69 • Deng's policy of opening China to the world.
4 'Confucian values continued to shape Chinese society throughout the years 1839 to 1998.' How far do you agree?	You might consider how the status of Confucianism either declined or grew at various points in China's development after 1839: • Confucianism as an underpinning of the Qing • The clash between science and Confucianism in the 4 May Movement • The New Life Movement's embracing of Confucianism • Mao's attack on Confucianism • Appeals during the post-Mao era for a return to Confucian values.

Planning an answer

Many plans simply list dates and events – this should be avoided as it encourages a descriptive or narrative answer, rather than an analytical answer. The plan should be an outline of your argument; this means you need to think carefully about the issues you intend to discuss and their relative importance before you start writing your answer. It should therefore be a list of the themes or issues you are going to discuss and a comment on their relative importance in relation to the question.

For question 3 in the table, your plan might look something like this:

- Opening paragraph: the Japanese occupation was only one of a number of factors which have to be considered.
- The Opium Wars were critical since initially they defined the character of China's foreign relations – one of subordination to Britain and the major powers.
- The unequal treaties in the second half of the nineteenth subjected key Chinese ports and cities to foreign control. The scramble for concession in the late 1890s led to the Boxer Uprising, which further exposed China's relative weakness.
- Yuan Shikai's republican government was dependent on foreign loans. China's further humiliation under the 1919 Versailles Treaty led to the anti-foreigner 4 May Movement. Chinese revolutionaries were attracted by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution's attack on imperialism.
- The need for US support determined the GMD's foreign policy 1945–9.
- The Soviet Union's exploitative approach in its offer of aid led to decades of Sino-Soviet rivalry.
- Deng's reforms required the opening of China to the world.

The opening paragraph

Many students spend time 'setting the scene'; the opening paragraph becomes little more than an introduction to the topic – this should be avoided. Instead, make it clear what your argument is going to be. Offer your view about the issue in the question – while Japanese occupation was obviously important, it has to be balanced against other factors – and then introduce the other issues you intend to discuss. This will give the examiner a clear overview of your essay, rather than it being a mystery tour where the

argument becomes clear only at the end. You should also refer to any important issues that the question raises. For example:

The Japanese occupation was obviously important, since it eventually drew China into the Second World War and made it an ally of the USA and the Western Allies[1]. However, in the previous century, developments had occurred that conditioned China's relations with the outside world. At every stage from the Opium Wars through to the Versailles Treaty, China had not been master of its own fate. This continued during the era of Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist China, which depended on foreign capital. This changed dramatically with the Communist takeover in 1949, the point at which China 'stood up' under Mao and rejected Western dominance. However, this was at the price initially of subordination to the Soviet Union, a situation against which Mao then rebelled. His assertion of Chinese independence was built on by Deng Xiaoping, who opened China financially and diplomatically to the world[2]. It is such factors that support the argument that while the Japanese occupation was certainly important, it was not the most important since it has to be balanced against the significance of the other developments[3].

1 The opening sentence offers a clear view about the relative importance of the Japanese occupation.
2 The following sentences describe the other factors in the development of China's international relations between 1839 and 1989.
3 This sentence provides a balance and suggests that the occupation was of relative, not absolute, importance.

The answer could then go on to raise other factors and provide an overview of the role they played across the whole period.

Avoid irrelevance and description

It is hoped that the plan will stop you simply writing all you know about the Japanese occupation and oblige you to weigh up the role of a range of factors. This will gain you marks and save valuable time.

Write analytically

This is perhaps the hardest, but most important skill you need to develop. An analytical approach can be helped by ensuring that the opening sentence of each paragraph introduces an idea, which directly answers the question and is not just a piece of factual information. In a very strong answer it should be possible simply to read the opening sentences of all the paragraphs and know what argument is being put forward.

If we look at question 1, 'Assess the impact of industrialisation on the development of Chinese society in the period from 1839 to 1989' (page 296), the following are possible sentences with which to start paragraphs:

- Industrialisation played a pivotal role in the growth of the Chinese economy by providing China with vital material resources.
- Although industrialisation was patchy in its development, it did prepare the way for China to begin to tackle its social problems.
- Industrialisation helped to create urbanisation and the growth of a powerful middle class in China.
- Industrialisation was looked on by both the Nationalists and the Communists as an essential part of economic planning.
- Despite Mao's having led a peasant revolution, his basic belief was that Communist China had to industrialise in order to survive in the face of Western and Soviet animosity.
- For Deng, industrialisation was the most important of his Four Modernisations.

Such a plan would enable you to assess the impact of industrialisation on Chinese society. You would then go on to discuss the key stages in the industrialisation, relating them to their social effects. The final sentence of the paragraph would reach a judgement on the role played by the factor you are discussing regarding the social impact of industrialisation. This approach would ensure that the final sentence of each paragraph links back to the actual question you are answering. If you can do this for each paragraph you will have a series of mini-essays, which discuss a factor and reach a conclusion or judgement about the importance of that factor or issue. For example:

Industrialisation played a central role in creating the resources with which China could begin addressing the social problems that confronted it[1]. Although slow by Western standards, the economic spurt in the late Qing period saw the spread of railways and industries on such a scale that it gave rise to an ambitious middle class. Despite being resented on patriotic grounds, Western enterprise and capital continued to provide models for expansion under the republic after 1912. Sun Yatsen's Nationalists made industrialisation a major objective in their plans for China. This was taken up by Jiang Jieshi, whose plans for providing the people's welfare were based on achieving successful industrialisation. This aim was largely thwarted by the Japanese occupation of China's most prosperous provinces, yet, ironically, it was such Japanese-controlled areas that witnessed continued industrial growth. Mao's economic plans for Communist China after 1949 operated initially on the Soviet industrial model, but as soon as he felt able, Mao abandoned this and embarked on the Great Leap Forward, a revolutionary programme by which he intended to make China wholly independent. However, his plans for achieving industrial lift-off by a mass effort of the people proved flawed and led to China's largest ever famine. Rejecting his predecessor's policies, Deng introduced his own brand of revolution by adopting the Four Modernisations, a neo-capitalist venture that placed industrial expansion at the centre. By reintroducing incentives and the profit motive, Deng encouraged the growth of an ambitious, entrepreneurial middle class which was foremost in transforming China into an international financial and economic power[2]. Far from smooth and unbroken though it was across the period, industrialisation had developed to the point where it had been instrumental in turning China into an economic powerhouse[3].

1 A clear view about the impact of industrialisation is offered.
2 This view is explained and supported by evidence from across the period.
3 This is then completed by emphasising how China had eventually achieved its industrial potential, changing society in the process.

The conclusion

The conclusion provides the opportunity to bring together all the interim judgements to reach an overall judgement about the question. Using the interim judgements will ensure that your conclusion is based on the argument in the main body of the essay and does not offer a different view. The same approach applies to question 4 (page 297), but for question 3 (page 297) you will need to assess whether the Japanese occupation was 'the most important stage'. You must comment on the importance of the named factor – the Japanese occupation – as well as explain why you think a different factor is more important, if that has been your line of argument. Or, if you think the named factor is the most important, you would need to explain why that was more important than the other factors. Similarly, in answering question 2 (page 296), you need to decide what was the most important turning point in in the development of Chinese government.

In reaching a judgement for question 2 (page 296), you might conclude:

Given the scale of the political disruption it caused, the Cultural Revolution was clearly important in the development of Chinese government. However, in historical terms it was not a unique event. As

an act of state authoritarianism exercised over the Chinese people it followed a number of precedents that had occurred in the years since 1839**[1]**. Prior to its 1912 collapse, the Qing dynasty had claimed an absolute right to rule. The republic that followed, whatever its intentions, had not extended political freedoms. Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists, despite their supposed commitment to democracy as part of the Three People's Principles, operated in practice as a repressive, restrictive regime. From its beginning in 1949, the Communist PRC was wholly intolerant of all opposition, with the Cultural Revolution being essentially an intensification of this absolute system. Even when Deng Xiaoping began liberalising the Chinese economy he resolutely refused to contemplate any concession to genuine democracy**[2]**. Whatever the aims and degree of success of those who took power at various stages in China between 1839 and 1989, they all governed as absolute systems**[3]**.

1 Summarises why the named turning point was not singularly important.
2 Explains why other possible turning points may be regarded as equally important.
3 Reaches an overall judgement, which weighs up the possible turning points against a range of themes.

Interpretations guidance

For each of the in-depth Interpretation elements, three topics are listed in the specification and a question will be set on one of the topics. The three topics for China and its Rulers 1839–1989 are as follows:

- The First Opium War and its impact.
- The Boxer Uprising.
- The Cultural Revolution.

Although this is an A level paper it is not a historiography paper. The aim of this element of the unit is to develop an awareness that the past has been interpreted in different ways. The question will require you to assess the strengths and limitations of the two interpretations of an issue related to one of the specified in-depth topics. The interpretations will always be from historians and will not be primary sources.

You should be able to place the interpretation within the context of the wider historical debate on the key topic. However, you will not be required to know the names of individual historians associated with the debate or to have studied the specific books of any historians.

There are a number of skills you will need to develop if you are to reach the higher levels in the mark bands:

- Remain focused on the question throughout the answer.
- Assess and evaluate the two interpretations in the wider context of the historical debate about the issue.
- Apply your knowledge of the topic to the interpretations in order to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.
- Ensure that you consider both interpretations.
- Reach a supported judgement as to which interpretation you think is more convincing.

Approaching the question

It might be helpful to think of a four-paragraph structure:

- In the first paragraph, explain the interpretations in the two passages and place them in the wider debate.
- In the second paragraph, apply your own knowledge to interpretation A to evaluate the validity of its view about the issue in the question. In doing this, own knowledge should be used to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the view in the interpretation.
- Repeat the second point, but for interpretation B.
- In the final paragraph, reach a supported and balanced judgement as to which view you think is more convincing.

You do not need to evaluate the provenance of the interpretation and therefore comments on the author and their background will not gain marks.

Questions set will be similar to the one below:

> Evaluate the interpretations in both of the passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an assessment of Mao's impact upon China.

PASSAGE A

From Graham Hutchings, *Modern China*, Penguin, 2001, pp. 294 and 302.

Like Stalin and Hitler, Mao was a titan and tyrant of the twentieth century who transformed his country, sometimes through extraordinary feats of will and often at terrible cost. Like his fellow dictators he realized long-cherished dreams of national revival only to turn them into nightmares. His Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution cost millions of lives; they were disasters on an epic scale. He raised his people up as no other leader of modern China but left them broken, traumatized and scarred. Much of his long reign was a tragedy – the more so for the fact that it began with an extraordinary revolutionary victory which boosted China's international status, unified continental China and saw spirited attempts to make a new society.

Mao's crimes have not been exposed in the way those of Hitler and Stalin have. Their deeds have long been the subject of examination; they are widely regarded as negative examples, as leaders of a kind that must never be allowed to seize power in their countries again. There have been no such developments in China. There has been no reckoning, no thorough investigation of the Chairman's reign. Such an undertaking has not been permitted on the grounds that it might cause the Communist Party to be swept into oblivion along with the reputation of its former leader.

PASSAGE B

From Lee Feigon, *Mao: A Reinterpretation*, Ivan R. Dee, 2002, pp. 139–40.

Nothing has damaged Mao's image as much as his role in initiating the Cultural Revolution, yet few of Mao's actions deserve as much praise. From today's perspective it is hard to understand why many still condemn a movement that not only battled corruption and streamlined bureaucracy but also strengthened the economy and promoted artistic and educational reform. Far from being the wasted decade, as it is usually called, the movement inaugurated a period of cultural and economic growth which set the stage for the celebrated transformation of China's financial system that has been much ballyhooed since Mao's death. The decade dominated by the Cultural Revolution left an enduring legacy of social justice, feminist ideals, and even democratic principles which today still resonate with many Chinese.

The positive impact of Mao's exercise in political engineering cannot be underestimated. Not only did he succeed in ousting more than 70 percent of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, he also reduced and decentralized the Soviet-style bureaucracy that was threatening to choke China, pruning it to one-sixth its former size. The impact of this bureaucratic clean up was far-reaching, with especially salubrious effects on China's economy. By managing to remove the central government from much of the day-to-day functioning of the economy, Mao, contrary to popular views, not only spiked the growth of Chinese industry during the Cultural Revolution period but also made it impossible for his successors to re-establish a Soviet-style economy in China after his death.

In answering the question, the opening paragraph could consider the views of the two interpretations and place them in the context of the debate:

Historians continue to debate the character of the policies followed by Mao as leader of China**[1]**. Some regard his policies as essentially destructive; others suggest that are a number of positive aspects to them. Passage A puts forward the view, particularly in the first part, that Mao had a disastrous effect on China and its people. In seeking to create a new society, Mao was responsible for the death of millions. Having initially gained a great victory over external and internal enemies and raised the expectations of the Chinese and the status of the nation, Mao, through such campaigns as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, disrupted society and left it traumatised**[2]**.

1 The opening places the passages in the wider context of the debate about the effects of Mao's social and economic policies.
2 The next part explains Passage A in relation to the issue raised in the question and supports its view by summarising part of the interpretation.

The answer could then go on to examine some of the points raised in Passage A, drawing particular attention to the argument in the last part of the passage that the grimness of Mao's record has not been exposed in the manner that Stalin's and Hitler's have.

The answer could then move on to consider the view put forward in Passage B and might suggest that Mao's policies were far from wholly negative in their impact.

Passage B also takes the Cultural Revolution as a central reference point but argues strongly that, contrary to received notions, as expressed in Passage A, it was through the revolution that Mao achieved genuinely progressive reform**[1]**. Passage B asserts that, by removing wasteful bureaucracy, the Cultural Revolution ushered in a time of economic, educational and artistic advance. Passage B also gives credit to Mao for his attack on corruption and praises him for transforming China's finances, and leaving China with a legacy of social justice, female emancipation and democracy. In doing so he saved China from going down the failed Soviet path. As Passage B has it, Mao's great achievement was to lay the basis, which his successor built upon, of a modern democratic, egalitarian state**[2]**.

1 The opening sentences summarise Passage B's view that the received interpretation of the Cultural Revolution is distorted.
2 The subsequent sentences give further details of the argument, thereby illustrating the major difference in the two interpretations.

In evaluating Passage B, the response might have gone on to consider other relevant aspects such as China's relations with the Soviet Union. A strong answer would reach an overall judgement, perhaps in the final sentence of the paragraph, about the validity of the views in the passages. The answer should have a concluding paragraph which brings together the two interim judgements to reach an overall judgement as to which view is more convincing.

In the conclusion it might be argued:

Both passages focus on the important factors relating to the impact of Mao's policies and draw firm conclusions from their observations. Passage A offers the received consensus view that the policies had very deleterious effects, quoting in support of that view the upheaval and death toll attendant on the implementation of the policies. Neither passage gives precise statistics, which limits their arguments, as put in the extracts, to a set of assertions. Although Passage B is impressively argued and assembles examples of the policies' positive effects on China, it is written very much as an apologia for Mao. It dismisses the received notion of Mao as a destroyer and, in contrast, provides a sympathetic and selective response by taking Mao's polices at face value and, in effect, accepting the propaganda that accompanied their introduction. It makes no mention of the policies' downsides, except to

dismiss them. This does not wholly invalidate its argument but it does leave it as a partial interpretation. One of its interpretive weaknesses is its claim that Mao's policies laid the basis for the subsequent modernisation of China, whereas the historical record shows that his successors achieved modernisation by abandoning Mao's programmes[1]. On balance, Passage A is the more convincing in that it is prepared to acknowledge Mao's transformative impact and extraordinary willpower, even though it judges that these were put to destructive use. Passage B is too restricted in its assessment in that it makes no allowance for the destructive aspect of the policies it applauds[2].

1 The answer reaches a judgement, initially about Passage A, and supports the judgement.
2 The judgement is developed and the answer explains why, despite the strengths of Passage B, Passage A is more convincing and again supports the claim.

Glossary of Chinese names

Modern standard	Older form
Anhui	Anhwei
Beijing	Peking
Boxers	I-ho chuan
Chen Duxui	Chen Tu-hsiu
Chongqing	Chungking
Chuanbi	Chuan-pi
Cixi	Tsu-hsi
Deng Xiaoping	Teng Hsiao-ping
Ding Ling	Ting Ling
Duan Qirui	Tuan Chi-jui
Fang Lizhi	Fang Li-chih
Fujian	Fukien
Fuzhou	Foochow
Gansu	Kansu
Guangdong	Kwangtung
Guangzhou	Canton
Guangxu	Kuang Hsu
Guizhou	Kweichow
Guomindang	Kuomingtang
Henan	Honan
Hong Xiuquan	Hong Hsiu-chan
Hua Guofeng	Hua Kuo-feng
Hubei	Hupei
Hu Yaobang	Hu Yao-pang
Jiang Jieshi	Chiang Kai-shek
Jiang Qing	Chiang Ching
Jiang Zemin	Chiang Tse-min
Jiangxi	Kiangsi
Li Hongzhang	Li Hung-chang
Lin Biao	Lin Piao
Li Dazhao	Li Ta-chao
Lin Zexu	Lin Tse-hsu
Liu Shaoqi	Liu Shao-chi
Manchu	Qing
Mao Zedong	Mao Tse-tung
Mukden	Shenyang
Nanjing	Nanking
Peng Dehuai	Peng Te-huai
Qingdao	Tsingtao
Qishan	Chi-shan
Shaanxi	Shensi
Shandong	Shantung
Shanxi	Shansi
Sichuan	Szechwan
Soong Qingling	Soon Ching-ling
Sun Yatsen	Sun Yixian
Sung Tzu-wen	T. V. Soong
Taiwan	Formosa
Wang Dongxing	Wang Tung-hsing
Wang Guangmei	Wang Kuang-mei
Wang Jingwei	Wang Ching-wei
Wei Jingsheng	Wei Ching-shen
Wuhan	Wuchang
Xian	Sian
Xinjiang	Sinkiang
Xu Shiyou	Hsu Shih-yu
Yanan	Yenan
Yangzi	Yangtse
Yuan Shikai	Yuan Shi-kai
Zhang Chunqiao	Chang Chun-chiao
Zhang Guotao	Chang Kuo-tao
Zhang Xun	Chang Hsun
Zhang Xueliang	Chang Hsueh-liang
Zhang Zuolin	Chang Tso-lin
Zhang Zongzhang	Chang Tsung-chang
Zhao Ziyang	Chao Tzu-yang
Zhejiang	Chekiang
Zhou Enlai	Chou En-lai
Zhu De	Chuh The
Zunyi	Tsunyi

Glossary of terms

Agit-prop Short for 'agitation propaganda', the teaching of political ideas through entertainment.

Agronomists Experts in agricultural science.

Anachronism Something out of date and no longer relevant.

Analgesics Painkillers.

Ancestor worship An incorrect interpretation of the Chinese practice of respecting the memory of departed members of the family by holding simple ceremonies in remembrance. A more accurate term would be 'ancestor veneration' rather than worship.

'Antagonistic contradiction' Aggressive opposition to party policy.

Anti-colonial tradition From the time of its founding as a nation in 1776, the USA had condemned all forms of colonialism, the takeover of a weaker country by a stronger.

Anti-Comintern Pact An agreement in 1936 between Germany, Italy and Japan, declaring their joint hostility to the Soviet Union.

Apostate A person or nation that abandons its original political or religious beliefs.

Asia Watch An international body concerned with monitoring human rights abuses.

Attaché Official government representative.

Autocracy The rule of a single authority; in China before 1912, the emperor.

Autonomy Self-government.

Autumn Harvest Rising Mao Zedong's unsuccessful 1927 campaign against the GMD in Hunan province, a failure that convinced Mao of the need to resort to guerrilla tactics and avoid pitched battles.

Axis powers Hitler's Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Fascist Italy, which fought against the Western Allies (France, Britain, the USSR and the USA) in the Second World War.

'Backyard furnaces' Primitive smelting devices that every family was encouraged to build on its premises.

'Bamboo curtain' A figurative way of describing China's hostile attitude towards the non-Communist world, similar to the notion of the 'iron curtain' which divided Western and Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

Barefoot doctors Teams of swiftly trained medics who were sent into the countryside to provide a rudimentary health service.

Beiping Meaning 'northern peace' to distinguish it from Beijing, which meant 'northern capital'.

Blue Shirts 'The Society for the Practice of the Three Principles of the People', a force largely recruited from officers at the Nationalist Military Academy in Nanjing whose main task was hunting down Communists.

Bolsheviks The Russian Communist Party.

Bourgeois stage of revolution The period of history when the middle class, having overcome the previous feudal system, dominates society until the working-class revolution occurs.

Bourgeoisie Marxist term for the exploiting middle class.

Boxers (*I-ho ch'uan*) Anti-Western secret societies, whose name derived from the martial arts they practised.

Brainwashing Using a combination of physical torture and psychological coercion to disorientate victims so that they become susceptible to suggestion and direction.

Brezhnev doctrine The demand that all international Communist parties should toe the Soviet line. If they failed to do so, they must be disciplined by the other Marxist states acting as 'a socialist community' under Soviet leadership.

Bride-price The payment made by the groom's family to the bride's family to seal a marriage contract.

Buddhism An ancient oriental philosophy, which laid great stress on the individual gaining enlightenment through meditation.

Cadre schools Labour camps where suspect government and CCP officials were sent.

Cadres Dedicated Communist Party workers whose special task was to spy and report on fellow CCP members.

'Capitalist roaders' A derogatory term used by hardliners to condemn those in the government who wished to see the economy modernised on neo-capitalist lines.

Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG) A sub-committee of the Politburo, established in May 1965. Its seventeen members included the Gang of Four.

Chargé d'affaires Equivalent to an ambassador.

Chauvinism Exaggerated belief in the superiority of the ideas and attitudes of one's own nation or group.

Chinoiserie Chinese artistic items such as delicately painted silk screens and decorated porcelain jugs and vases.

CIA Central Intelligence Agency, the USA's espionage and counter-espionage organisation.

'Cleansing the class ranks' A terror campaign to exterminate all those whose social background, in the eyes of the extremists running China, made them real or potential enemies of Mao and the Communist state.

Coexistence A willingness among nations with conflicting ideologies to let and let live; a corollary of detente.

Cold War The period of tension (1945–91) between the Communist Eastern bloc, led by the USSR, and the Western democratic nations, led by the USA.

Collectives Areas where the peasants farmed communally rather than for themselves individually.

Collectivist principle The Marxist notion that social advance can be achieved only by the proletarian class acting together as a body and not allowing individuals to follow their own interests.

Comfort women Chinese females who were forced to work in the brothels specially set up for the troops of the Japanese army.

Comintern The Communist International, the body set up in Moscow in 1919 to organise international revolution by requiring foreign Communists to follow the Russian path.

Communes Organised regions where the collectives were grouped together.

'Compradors' Chinese nationals who acted as go-betweens between the foreign companies and government officials.

Concubinage The practice of men keeping women not as wives but as mistresses (concubines).

Concubines Girls and young women chosen for their attractiveness and brought to court. To be selected brought great pride upon the girl and her family.

Congress The United States' parliament.

Conjugal visits Time set aside for married couples to be intimate.

Consortium A group of financers who draft and monitor loan offers. In this instance, the consortium was composed of members from France, Britain, Germany, Russia, Japan and the USA.

Consul The senior administrative official in a foreign legation.

Corrective labour A form of imprisonment intended to re-educate prisoners into correct thinking.

'Cult of personality' A reference to the amount of power Stalin had taken into his hands at the expense of the Soviet Communist Party.

Cult status A position that entitles the holder to a special veneration among the people and puts him or her beyond criticism.

Dalai Lama The spiritual leader of the Lama faith, the traditional Buddhist religion of the Tibetan people.

9 December Movement The title was meant to convey the continuity between this protest and the movements of 4 May 1919 and 30 May 1925.

Deficit The gap between government income and expenditure.

Democratic centralism The principle that in a truly revolutionary party the members owed absolute loyalty and obedience to the leaders.

Denominations Separate groups within a faith, for example, Catholicism and Protestantism within Christianity.

Depression Between 1929 and the late 1930s, there was a serious worldwide slump in industrial production and international trade.

Detente Easing of tensions between opposed powers.

Dialectical process The successive series of class conflicts which, Marxists believed, would culminate in the victory of the working class over capitalism.

Disposable income The amount of earnings that remains after the basic costs of living have been met, giving the holders the ability to spend or invest the surplus.

Dogma Rigid, unchanging belief in a particular approach.

'Dollar diplomacy' America's insistence on unfettered exchange in international commercial and financial dealings.

Double Tenth The tenth day of the tenth month, October 1911.

Dowager Empress Equivalent to a queen mother.

Drip effect Letting Mao's reputation gradually erode rather than formally attacking it.

East India Company A private British company which had achieved a huge commercial success in foreign trading and had been largely responsible for the growth of Britain's preponderant influence in India.

Eastern bloc The USSR and the central European countries, for example, Poland and Hungary, that it dominated in Eastern Europe.

Eight Nation Alliance (The title by which the Boxer Uprising is still known in China.) Composed of Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the USA.

Empirical methods Forms of research based on direct observation and measurement.

Entrepreneurialism The dynamic, expansionist attitude associated with Western industrial and commercial activity in this period.

Eunuchs Selected young men who were castrated at an early age and spent their life at court. The position was eagerly sought after and to be chosen was regarded as a great honour.

European expansionism The desire of the major European powers to open up new areas for commercial exploitation.

Excommunication Formal dismissal from the Catholic Church.

Expatriate Chinese living abroad, most numerously in Singapore, Malaya and Indonesia.

Extended family Not just parents and children but all the relatives, including in-laws.

Fait accompli Something done in such a way that it cannot be changed.

Fascist Referring strictly only to Mussolini's Italy, the word came to be applied to all the nationalistic, authoritarian regimes of the period.

Female emancipation The lifting of all social and economic restrictions on women.

Feudalism A system in which peasants held land but never fully owned it since it remained the property of the landlord for whom they worked.

Five-Year Plans In the USSR between 1929 and 1953, Stalin revolutionised the Soviet economy by a set of government-directed Five-Year Plans aimed at achieving a massive increase in industrial output.

Flintlock muskets Cumbersome weapons, long abandoned by European armies, which required considerable time and effort to load and fire.

Forbidden City Beijing's greatest monument, a spacious walled inner city that had been the home of the emperors and the court since 1368.

'Foreign devils' An expression used by many Chinese to denote their hatred of the Westerners who dominated China.

Foreign embassies In international convention, these are specially protected areas which the host nation respects as being immune from local interference.

Foreign interventionists A large number of countries, including Britain, France and Japan, sent forces to Russia to fight against the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War of 1918–20.

Foreign settlements In addition to the British, a number of other Westerners, principally French, Russian and American traders and missionaries, had set up bases in China.

Free trade (also known as *laissez-faire*). A commercial system based on the conviction that governments should not attempt to regulate trade but should leave it entirely in the hands of the traders.

Gang of Four Made up of Jiang Qing and her three male associates, Zhang Chunqiao (1917–2001), Yao Wenyuan (1931–2005) and Wang Hongwen (1932–92).

GATT General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Genocide The deliberate destruction of a people or ethnic group.

Gentry The class below the nobility but above the peasants and workers. In China, this class prided itself on its refinement and good taste.

Gestapo The Nazi secret police.

Gettysburg address A speech delivered by US President Lincoln in 1863 during the American Civil War (1861–5), in which he defined the purpose of the struggle to be the establishment of 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'.

Great Hall of the People A large parliament building on the west side of Tiananmen Square.

Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere Theoretically, cooperation between Japan and China, but in reality Japanese domination of China.

Green Gang Shanghai racketeers who dealt mainly in drug running, and who were notorious for bribing police and government officials.

Group of Five A set of moderate party officials led by Peng Zhen (1902–97), the mayor of Beijing.

Gruel A thin, watery porridge made without milk.

Guangdong army The Japanese army already stationed in Guangdong province.

Guerrilla A hit-and-run style of fighting, avoiding pitched battles and using local knowledge of people and terrain to harass the enemy.

Guomindang The Chinese Nationalist Party (shortened to 'GMD' or the 'Nationalists').

Guomindang Revolutionary Alliance and the **Democratic League** Formed from breakaway Nationalists who despaired of Jiang's leadership and policies. They wanted a compromise settlement with the CCP.

Heavy industry Iron- and steel-based products and constructions.

Hegemony Control and authority exercised by one country over others.

Heroes' Monument A large shrine, commemorating the great deeds of China's revolutionary past, at the southern end of Tiananmen Square.

Hyperinflation A fall in the value of money that is so rapid and sustained that it destroys purchasing power and savings.

Ideograms Literally pictures; Mandarin symbols had begun as pictures of the ideas they described.

Impeachment Formal parliamentary censure.

Imperial dynasties Rule by hereditary emperors belonging to a particular house.

Imperialist phase of capitalism In Marxist theory, the stage of history when the capitalist nations progressed from exploiting their own domestic markets to seizing and exploiting overseas territories.

Import levies Payments that foreign traders were required to pay to the Chinese government as a condition of trade.

Indemnity Compensation paid by the loser to the victor for the costs of war.

Indentured labourers Workers tied to their employers by harsh legal restrictions. The Chinese 'coolies', as the indentured labourers became disparagingly known, played a vital part in the construction of the US railways in the nineteenth century.

Indigenous Developed by local people.

Industrial Revolution The economic expansion, beginning around the mid-eighteenth century in Western Europe and North America, creating huge wealth and leading to colonial expansion.

Inflation A fall in the value and, therefore, the purchasing power of money (most sharply felt by ordinary Chinese when they found that the items they bought became increasingly expensive).

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Created in 1947 with the main intention of preventing countries from going bankrupt. Member states make deposits into a central fund from which they are entitled to draw in times of difficulty.

International settlements (concessions) Zones in which the foreign expatriates lived and in which their laws, religion and practices operated to the exclusion of the Chinese.

'Iron rice bowl' The system that provided workers with a guaranteed job and protected their wages.

Joint-stock companies Enterprises in which investors become shareholders entitled to receive profits in proportion to the size of their investment; their financial liability to the company is also restricted in proportion to their investments.

Junks Slow-moving, flat-bottomed, sailing vessels.

Khampas The nomadic herdsmen of Tibet.

Kowtow The requirement that, when entering the emperor's presence, visitors showed respect by not looking upon him and by prostrating themselves face down and tapping their head nine times on the floor.

Kyoto Protocol A formal commitment by industrial nations in 1997 to limit the emission of their greenhouse gases. Neither China nor the USA signed the Protocol.

Labour-contract scheme An agreement between employers and workers, based on the principle of higher wages in return for greater effort and higher productivity.

Laogai The term, meaning 're-education through labour', came to be used to describe the prison-camp system itself.

League of Nations The body set up in 1919 with the aim of settling future international disputes.

Left GMD and the **Democratic League** Splinter parties which had broken away from Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists and sided with the Communists.

Left GMD The pro-Moscow Marxist sympathisers within the Guomindang.

Lend–lease Provision of goods and supplies at no charge or at very low rates of interest.

Liberated The Communist term for the areas they brought under their military and political control.

'Lift-off' Increasing output and production at such a pace as to turn China into a modern industrial power.

Lysenkoism The fraudulent theories of the Soviet agronomist Trofim Lysenko.

Manchu Also known as the Qing, the last imperial dynasty (1644–1911).

Mandarins A class of educated bureaucrats who assisted the emperor in governing China.

Mandate of heaven The force of history that justifies the holding of power by those in authority; a Confucian concept.

Market The uncontrolled interplay of supply and demand.

Marxism–Leninism The body of Marxist ideas as interpreted and applied by Lenin.

Materiel Military resources.

McCarthyism A movement which took its name from Senator Joseph McCarthy, head of a Congressional Committee seeking to expose secret Communists supposedly working in the US administration. The Committee was responsible for creating a 'Red scare' for much of the 1950s.

Meiji period The reign of Japanese Emperor Meiji (1869–1914).

Millet plus rifles A term earlier used by Mao to explain why the PLA had defeated the Nationalists; he claimed that ordinary Chinese had supplied his forces with food to sustain them in their military struggle.

'Most favoured nation' Special economic privilege and status extended by one nation to another.

Nadir The lowest point.

Nanjing One of the GMD's major strongholds in central China.

National Revolutionary Army (NRA) The GMD's military wing.

NATO The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, formed in 1949 by Britain, France, the Benelux countries and the USA as a safeguard against Soviet expansion into Western Europe.

'Neo-capitalism' A restoration of the bourgeois system based on individualism and profit-making.

Nobel Peace Prize Awarded annually by the Norwegian Nobel Committee to a selected person who 'shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations'.

Nuclear family Mother, father and their children, considered as a unit.

October Revolution The seizure of power in Russia by the Bolsheviks in the name of the workers in October 1917.

'Open door' The American policy aimed at preventing European powers imposing unfair commercial agreements on China.

Opium Produced from the seed of the poppy flower, which grew profusely in parts of India. Smoked in its crushed form, it induces feelings of relaxation and well-being.

Pacific Rim The lands around the rim of the Pacific Ocean, including such countries as Japan, Russia, Taiwan, North and South Korea, the Philippines, the USA and Australia.

Packing Controlling the membership of committees in such a way that they always contained a majority of sympathisers.

Panchen Lama Designated successor to the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Lama faith.

Panmunjong truce The agreement brought the fighting to an end but decided little since the two sides simply agreed to recognise the division of Korea at the 38th parallel.

Papacy The Catholic Church's system of government, headed by the pope.

'Paper tigers' A dismissive term Mao often applied to any people or nation whose power was more apparent than real.

Party line Party policy and attitudes as defined by the leaders, to be followed by the members.

Patriarchal Male dominated.

Peasant associations Self-protection organisations formed by local communities in the rural areas.

People's Armed Police (PAP) Technically a civilian police force, but, since the majority of members were ex-service personnel, it was essentially a wing of the PLA.

People's Daily The official CCP newspaper, and the government's mouthpiece.

People's Welfare Sometimes loosely translated as 'socialism'.

Pinyin A modernised form of Mandarin.

PLA The People's Liberation Army, formerly the CCP's Red Army.

Plenipotentiary A special government representative invested with full power to negotiate.

Plenum A full, formal, authoritative gathering of the CCP.

Pogrom A state-organised persecution against a particular group of people.

Politburo An inner core of some twenty leading members of the party.

Post-imperial guilt The notion that the exploitative record of the ex-colonial powers denied them the moral right to interfere in the regions they had once held.

Pragmatism A way of tackling problems based on the actual situation rather than on abstract theory.

Prague spring The attempt in 1968 of the Czech Communist government to liberalise its policies and assert its independence of Soviet control.

Productivity The efficiency with which an article is manufactured, measured by the time and cost involved in its production.

Proletariat The industrial working class, destined, in Marxist analysis, to be the final victor in the dialectical process.

Proselytisers Committed believers actively seeking to convert others to their faith.

Purchasing power The capacity to buy goods and items.

Purges In theory, the purifying of the party by removing the corrupt elements within it; in practice, a convenient method for removing opponents and critics.

Quality control The monitoring of industrial production so that items meet a set standard.

Quid pro quo Something for something, a balanced exchange.

Rapprochement A return to friendlier relations.

Reactionaries Those opposed to progressive or revolutionary change.

Rectification The disciplining of party members who were guilty of incorrect political thinking or actions.

Red Army The military force developed by the Bolsheviks which had enabled them to win the Russian Civil War (1918–20).

Red Guards Radical students whose name derived from the red armbands they were given by Lin Biao.

Regent A stand-in who rules until a monarch is old enough or sufficiently capable of taking power.

Republic A form of government in which there is no monarch and power is exercised by elected representatives.

'Reunification' campaigns The Chinese government's term for its crushing of regional resistance within the PRC.

Revisionist Reactionary, anti-party, anti-Mao thinking.

Revolutionary correctness The idea that Chinese communism (Maoism) was a body of political, social

and economic truth which all CCP members had to accept and live by.

Rogue regime A government not conforming to accepted international diplomatic standards and, therefore, difficult to influence or control.

Russo-Japanese War A conflict from 1904 to 1905 that resulted in the victory of the Japanese over the Russians and became an inspiration to Asian peoples seeking to match or challenge the Western world.

Scramble for Africa In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the greater part of Africa had been colonised by the competing European powers, principally France, Germany and Britain.

Second Opium War Known to the Chinese as the Anglo-French War.

'Second Revolution' An unsuccessful attempt by the GMD to remove Yuan Shikai in 1913.

Secular bible The Little Red Book came to have the same authority in Maoist society as the Bible had in Christian culture or the Koran in Islamic.

Security Assets to cover the cost of a loan should it not be repaid. (In this instance, China agreed that if it defaulted on its repayments, its tax revenue would be forfeit.)

Self-determination The principle that nations were entitled to shape and plan their own development free from outside interference and direction.

Shanghai Five A formal meeting in 1996 between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Shanghai Forum A group of hardline leftist radicals, who believed in the harshest measures being taken against those who opposed Mao.

Show trial Public hearing in which the accused, whose guilt is assumed, is paraded as an enemy of the people.

Sino-centric Inward looking, preoccupied with China. 'Sino' is a prefix meaning Chinese.

Social fascists A term first used by Stalin to denote those who were willing to compromise with their political enemies.

Socialist concepts The structuring of the economy by the government with the aim of ending privilege and spreading equality.

South and North dynasties A reference to the partition of China during the civil wars of the fifth and sixth centuries AD.

Sovereign state An independent, self-governing nation.

Soviet A Communist-controlled area in which life, politically, socially and economically, is structured along communal, socialist lines.

Soviet satellites The various countries that had fallen under Soviet control between 1945 and 1948 and made up the Communist bloc.

Special Administrative Region (SAR) An area granted the right to remain substantially the same in its social and economic system, given that it recognised the ultimate sovereignty of the PRC government over it.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) The areas containing China's main export industries and companies, which were earmarked for immediate and concentrated development.

Spratly Islands An island group in the South China Sea which was believed to have large oil deposits; the islands had been claimed variously by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

State subsidies A scheme of payments, introduced in Mao's time, to supplement workers' or businesses' low income.

Status quo The existing political and social system.

Summer Palace A set of picturesque buildings, lakes and gardens that dated from the thirteenth century AD, but had been allowed to fall into disrepair by 1860.

Superpower A nation that possesses advanced nuclear weaponry.

Sweatshops Crowded, unhealthy premises at high risk of fire where unscrupulous bosses exploited cheap labour.

Taiping The Celestial Kingdom of Heavenly Peace.

Test Ban Treaty An agreement in 1963 between the USSR and the Western nuclear powers, in which the parties pledged to end their atmospheric testing of atomic weapons.

Third Reich Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime 1933–45.

Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) Dating from 1965, when Mao's government tried to give a

semblance of legality to its control of Tibet by declaring it to be a self-governing region.

Tokyo Japan's capital city and centre of government.

Trans-Siberian railway Stretching from Moscow to Vladivostok, it connected Russia's European and Asian territories.

Triads Secret societies, usually criminal, involved in drugs, gambling and prostitution rackets.

Tributary state A region under Chinese domination and required to make payments to China on demand.

Trotskyists Followers of Stalin's great rival, Leon Trotsky, who believed in the necessity of world revolution at any cost.

Tsarist Refers to the traditional system by which Russia was governed by autocratic tsars (emperors) before 1917.

'Twenty-eight Bolsheviks' A particular set of CCP members who had been trained in Moscow and returned to China with instructions to make the party conform to Soviet concepts of urban revolution.

Uighur, Kazakh, Hui and Kirghiz Ethnic groups, who, in regard to race, language and religion, were distinct from the Han people who made up over 90 per cent of China's population.

UN Security Council A UN body set up to resolve international disputes, by force if necessary; its five permanent members were Britain, France, Nationalist China, the USSR and the USA.

'Unequal treaties' One-sided agreements forced on the Chinese government, which obliged China to recognise foreign trading and territorial rights.

United Nations (UN) The body that succeeded the League of Nations in 1945 as an organisation to maintain international peace.

US immigration laws Having earlier invited Chinese labourers into the country to help build the railways, the USA in the 1890s had begun to introduce immigration restrictions which specifically discriminated against the Chinese.

Usury Charging exorbitant interest on money loans.

Vassal state A nation effectively under the control of another.

Vatican The administrative centre of the Catholic Church in Rome, where the pope has his official residence.

Velvet revolutions The non-violent popular movements in the Soviet satellites in the late 1980s that brought down the Communist governments and led eventually to the collapse of the Soviet Union by 1991.

Versailles Conference The meeting of the victor nations at Versailles in France in 1919 to draw up the peace treaty and reshape the map of Europe.

'Warlords' Powerful local generals who exploited the weakness of the central government to set themselves up as rulers in their own areas.

War-crimes arraignment In 1946, an International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) was set up in Tokyo, before which thousands of Japanese war criminals were arraigned and tried.

Washington Conference A meeting of the major maritime nations at which they agreed to limit their warship building.

White Terror The GMD's massacre of the Communists. White was a common term for Jiang's Nationalists, in contrast to Red for the Communists.

World Bank A UN financial body, similar in operation to the IMF, that provides loans to developing countries to enable them to embark on growth programmes.

World Trade Organisation (WTO) Originally formed in 1948 as GATT, a body to oversee and regulate international trade agreements, it became the WTO in 1995, its 160 member states representing over 96 per cent of global trade.

Xiang The original village or township.

Yasukini Shrine A traditional site in Tokyo dedicated to the remembrance of Japanese heroes.

Yuan China's currency; worth approximately 10p in 1950 values.

Further reading

Books of overall relevance

S.A.M. Adshead, *China in World History* (Macmillan, 1995)
An absorbing study of China's development as a modern state

P.J. Bailey, *China in the Twentieth Century* (Blackwell, 1988)
A short but very informative coverage

Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (Cambridge University Press, 2002)
An exquisitely presented survey, whose later chapters cover the period from the Qing to Deng Xiaoping

Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Wobbling Pivot: China Since 1800* (Blackwell, 2010)
A sympathetic study of China's difficult path to modernity

John King Fairbank, *China: A New History* (Belknap Press, 1994)
An insightful narrative by one of the Western pioneer scholars of Chinese history

Jonathan Fenby, *The Penguin History of Modern China 1850–2008* (Allen Lane, 2008)
A lively account of China's transition to modernity with an excellent bibliography

Jack Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions* (Oxford University Press, 2002)
A hard but rewarding read, strong on the interplay of Chinese politics and economics

Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China* (Oxford University Press, 2000)
An established major work from a Chinese perspective

Graham Hutchings, *Modern China* (Penguin, 2001)
An indispensable reference book

Alan Lawrence, *China Since 1919 – Revolution and Reform* (Routledge, 2004)
A very accessible selection of documents covering much of the period

Pei-kai Cheng and Michael Lestz, editors, *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (W.W. Norton, 1999)
A documentary companion to Jonathan Spence's book of the same name

R.J. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (Transaction Publishers, 2007)
The grim data of China's suffering in the twentieth century

Jonathan Spence and Annping Chin, *The Chinese Century: A Photographic History* (HarperCollins, 1996)
A combination of clear analysis and graphic illustrations

Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (W.W. Norton, 1990)
The same writer's masterly narrative of the development of modern China

Jeffrey Wasserstrom, editor, *Twentieth Century China: New Approaches* (Routledge, 2003)
A very useful guide to some of the major Western reappraisals of modern China

Chapter 1

Jerome Ch'en, *China and the West* (HarperCollins, 1979)
A scholarly analysis of the impact of the West on China in the nineteenth century

Julia Lovell, *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China* (Picador, 2011)
Examines the war and the way it permanently shaped China's distrustful attitude towards the West

Victor Purcell, *The Boxer Uprising: A Background Study* (Cambridge University Press, 2010)
Established as the outstanding Western analysis of the uprising

Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (W.W. Norton, 1996)
A gripping account of the largest rebellion in Chinese history

Chapter 2

Jung Chang, *Empress Dowager Cixi* (Vintage, 2014)
A not wholly convincing attempt to portray Cixi as a moderniser, but a lively and readable treatment

Paul Cohen, editor, *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism, 1860–1870* (Harvard University, 2013)
A set of scholarly essays on the influence of the missionaries in Qing China

Chapter 3

Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen* (Stanford University Press, 1998)
An informed biography of China's first modern revolutionary

Jonathan Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution 1895–1980* (Faber, 1982)
An illuminating study by the leading Western authority on China's modern history

Benjamin Schwarz, editor, *Reflections on the May Fourth Movement* (Harvard University Press, 1973)
A collection of authoritative essays on the significance of the movement

Chapter 4

Frank Dikötter, *The Age of Openness: China Before Mao* (Hong Kong University Press, 2008)
An extended essay which provocatively suggests that Nationalist China was a period of genuine freedom for the Chinese

Lloyd Eastman, *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927–37* (Cambridge University Press, 1991)
A study of the period when Jiang Jieshi and the Nationalists were at their strongest

Jonathan Fenby, *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the World He Lost* (Allen Lane, 2008)
A very readable analysis of the failure of Jiang (Chiang) and the Nationalists

Tony Saich, editor, *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party* (M.E. Sharpe, 1995)
A voluminous set of documents and analysis, well worth dipping into

Chapter 5

Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (Penguin, 1998)
A harrowing analysis of the Japanese occupation of China

Frank Dikötter, *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution 1945–1957* (Bloomsbury, 2014)
A volume in the author's invaluable document-based analysis of the changes wrought in China under Mao's leadership

Michael Lynch, *The Chinese Civil War 1945–49* (Osprey, 2010)
A graphically illustrated account of the CCP's victory over the GMD

Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters*: *The Chinese Civil War 1946–50* (Stanford University Press, 2003)
The most authoritative analysis of the CCP–CMD struggle

Chapter 6

Delia Davin, *Mao Zedong* (Sutton Publishing, 1997)
A little gem of a biography that says a great deal in a very short space

Lee Feigon, *Mao: A Reinterpretation* (Ivan R. Dee, 2002)
A sympathetic study of Mao from a left-leaning American scholar

Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War* (Stanford University Press, 1993)
An exploration of Mao's involvement in the Korean War

Michael Lynch, *Mao* (Routledge, 2004)
A combination of narrative and analysis, written with students in mind

Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1999)
A biography which is particularly strong on foreign affairs

Chapter 7

Jasper Becker, *Hungry Ghosts: China's Secret Famine* (John Murray, 1996)
The first major Western Study of Mao's Great Famine

Timothy Cheek, editor, *A Critical Introduction to Mao* (Cambridge University Press, 2010)
A set of scholarly essays, covering Mao's ideas, policies and legacy and examining the historiography that has developed around him

Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–62* (Bloomsbury, 2010)
A harrowing account of the disastrous results of Mao's Great Leap Forward

David J. Pyle, *China's Economy, 1949–94: From Revolution to Reform* (Macmillan, 1997)
An informed tracing of China's economic development from Mao to Deng

Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-Tung Unrehearsed: Talks and Letters: 1956–71* (Penguin, 1974)
Mao in his own words

Chapter 8

Gregor Benton and Lin Chun, editors, *Was Mao Really a Monster?* (Routledge, 2010)
A critique of Jung Chang's biography, which seeks to present a balanced alternative assessment of Mao's impact on China

Frank Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962–76* (Bloomsbury, 2016)
The third is the author's trilogy on Mao's impact on China, this volume deal in gripping detail with the response of the people to Mao's extraordinary social experiment

Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (Jonathan Cape, 2005)
A strongly committed and very readable account of Mao's policies, but criticised by other historians for its heavy animus against Mao

Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Belknap Press, 2006)
Traces the origins, course and consequences of Mao's extraordinary attempt to leave his permanent mark on the revolutionary China

Michael Schoenhals, *China's Cultural Revolution, 1966–1969* (M.E. Sharpe, 1996)
An informative combination of analysis and documentation

Chapter 9

Richard Evans, *Deng Xiaoping and the Making of Modern China* (Viking Books, 1993)
A fascinating assessment of Deng by the British ambassador in Deng's China

Wu Jie, *On Deng Xiaoping Thought* (Foreign Languages Press, 1996)
A member of the CCP gives a Chinese insight into Deng's significance

Harrison Salisbury, *The New Emperors Mao and Deng: A Biography* (HarperCollins, 1992)
Arranged in short, punchy chapters, this dual biography provides fascinating insights into the careers of its subjects

Benjamin Yang and Bingzhang Yang, *Deng: A Political Biography* (M.E. Sharpe, 1998)
An assessment by two Chinese writers of Deng's achievements

Chapter 10

Yasheng Huang, *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics* (Cambridge University Press, 2008)
A detailed study of China's problems in adapting to the capitalist world

Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2004)
True to its subtitle, a fascinating study of China's efforts to adjust to its chosen path towards modernity

Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Harvard University Press, 2011)
A detailed but rewarding study of Deng's revolution

Jeffrey Wasserstrom, editor, *Twentieth Century China: New Approaches* (Routledge, 2003)
A very useful guide to some of the major Western reappraisals of modern China

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